Supreme Court voids with finality PEA-Amari deal

Story below, Col. 1

SC orders probe of 2 CA justices for case-fixing

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE HIGH court yesterday took aim at so-called hoodlums in robes, ordering a full-blown investigation into charges that two appellate justices were engaged in case-fixing at the Court of Appeals.

In a unanimous resolution of the full court, the Supreme Court appointed re-

SC ORDERS/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

SARS toll nears 500; risk higher for old folks

BEIJING—As the global death toll from SARS approaches 500, new research published Wednesday suggests that Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome is much more deadly than many other respiratory diseases, particularly among old people.

New findings in Britain's Lancet medical journal show that the death rate of in-

SARS/ A6

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Thursday, May 8, 2003 ★★ 54 pages / 4 sections / vol. 18 / no. 149 P15 website: www.inq7.net

GMA standing squarely behind Armed Forces

By Carlito Pablo
and Martin P. Marfil

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is standing squarely behind the Armed Forces despite Gracia Burnham's claim of collusion between her Abu Sayyaf captors and certain military officials.

The President's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said that she had "full trust and confidence in the Armed Forces," and that she was leaving it up to the military to address Burnham's disclosures in her book.

The military was less mild in its reaction.

"It is unbelievable," AFP spokesperson Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia told reporters. "I can't believe that. I can't believe that our officers can do it—especially a general—to be in collusion with the Abu Sayyaf for a cut in ransom money."

Garcia also said the claim of Burnham—for whose rescue, he noted, the military had "lost so many people"—was "a shotgun allegation because she did not mention anyone."

Former AFP Chief of Staff Roy Cimatu, who succeeded Army chief Gregorio Camiling as head of the Southern Command when rescue operations were in full swing, put the soldiers' body count at 45. "It's really unfair to make those allegations considering

GMA/ A20

"MY GOAL in writing this (book) has been to tell Martin's story," Gracia writes about her late husband (middle). About Aldam Tilao (aka Abu Sabaya, extreme left), she writes, ... "known for his flair; very good English ... With the hostages the entire time."

GRACIA BURNHAM: A long way from being roused out of bed at dawn at gunpoint two years ago. PDI PHOTO

Gracia: Troops, Abus in cahoots

General wanted 50% of hostages' ransom

WICHITA, Kansas—A Filipino general demanded a 50-percent cut of the ransom paid for the hostages of the Abu Sayyaf, according to American missionary Gracia Burnham.

This claim of collusion among many others is contained in Burnham's newly released book, "In the Presence of My Enemies," which details the 377-day ordeal that she and her husband Martin suffered at the hands of the Abu Sayyaf, and that ended with a bloody Army rescue last June 7 that left Martin and Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap dead.

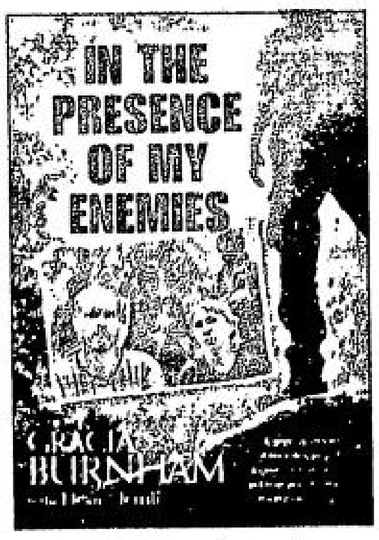
Burnham said members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines provided rice, sugar and other food for the bandits holding her captive. She said she was told it was because the Abu Sayyaf was "wheeling and dealing" with the general in the region, who wanted a cut of the ransom.

She said the bandits offered 20 percent but that the general wanted 50 percent. Negotiations between the two sides ultimately broke down, she said.

The Abu Sayyaf attracted international attention with a year-long kidnapping spree that began in May 2001 in a Palawan resort. They eventually killed 18 of the 102 hostages they took.

But a year earlier, a faction of the bandit group abducted Fil-

GRACIA/ A21



IN THE PRESENCE OF MY ENEMIES
GRACIA BURNHAM

THE BOOK: On sale starting May 19 at Powerbooks

Ex-hostage, Nacorda elated by revelations

By Juliet L. Javellana

THE FIRST ex-hostage of the Abu Sayyaf to admit paying ransom to the bandit group and Fr. Cirilo Nacorda are heartened by Gracia Burnham's revelations.

"I am thankful. At least it did not come only from us," Raul "Buddy" Recio, a travel magazine publisher, said yesterday in a phone interview. He also said he expected Burnham to tell all in her book.

According to Recio, Burnham told her fellow ex-hostages shortly after she was rescued by soldiers last year that she believed it was the military that killed her husband Martin.

"It was a bungled rescue," Recio said, adding that the conversation with Burnham took place, upon

EX-HOSTAGE/ A21

'I'm going to start praying for a hamburger...'

(Excerpts from Christian Broadcasting Network's interview with Gracia Burnham where she recounted her life as a hostage of the Abu Sayyaf. The interview was conducted in relation to the launching of her book, "In the Presence of My Enemies.")

(S)OMEONE paid a ransom for us in April (2002), and right about that time, it's like God would answer any prayer we had except that we could go home.

So I told Martin, "Well, I'm going to stop praying that I can go home. I'm going to start praying for a hamburger, because if God gives me a hamburger that means I'm outta here!"

So I started earnestly praying for a hamburger, and wouldn't you know, one night they snuck us off of Basilan in a little fishing boat, and we went to Zamboanga, to a little Muslim village there not far from the city. And someone went to Jollibee, their ... McDonalds, and bought us hamburgers. And less than 24 hours (later), under darkness again, we snuck back (out of) Zamboanga.

And it's like the Lord just hit us over the head with, "OK, I can give you a hamburger."

(T)hat's when we realized, God didn't want us out of there. And I think that's when we ... started thinking that we weren't going to get out of there. That was hard. Yeah, that was hard.

* * *

I was sitting beside a stream and I saw this little minnow and

I'M GOING/ A21

Piatco wants $500M plus interest, says lawyer

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Abigail L. Ho

A PAYMENT scheme not to the liking of the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco) will compel it to block a government takeover of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 3, according to Piatco's chief legal counsel.

"If the government will not be able to come up with an acceptable payment scheme and payment program, we will exercise our option to stop the takeover," Frank Chavez said.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said Tuesday the government would take over the passenger terminal and reimburse Piatco the cost of putting it up only after the Supreme Court ruling on Piatco's contracts became final.

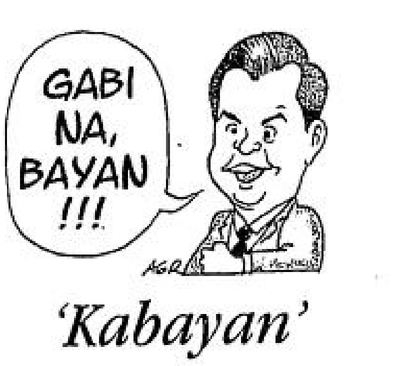
The Supreme Court ruled on Monday that the government may temporarily take over and operate the terminal in the public interest. It found that the consortium was disqualified to bid for the project in the first place and had obtained preferential terms that were not offered to other interested parties. Piatco said it would file a motion for reconsideration.

"The government shall operate Terminal 3 in the meantime, until the time is feasible for its privatization," President Macapagal-Arroyo said in a statement yesterday. Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the President wanted Naia 3 to be privatized during the next administration.

Piatco, a consortium that involves German airport operator Fraport AG, earlier said the facility would be ready later this year. Bunye said Malacañang expected Naia 3 to open four months after the Supreme Court ruling became final.

In a long distance call from Legazpi City, Chavez told the INQUIRER that the

PIATCO/ A19



'Kabayan' edges out Roco in poll

By Carlito Pablo

IMAGINE the next President addressing the country in Noli de Castro's trademark greeting "*magandang gabi, bayan.*"

Improbable? Not so. A nationwide survey conducted by Pulse Asia from March 29 to April 12 showed De Castro, broadcaster and senator, dislodging former Education Secretary Raul Roco as the

'KABAYAN'/ A20

High court voids with finality PEA-Amari deal

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SUPREME Court yesterday voided another controversial deal with finality: the high-profile PEA-Amari contract inked during the Ramos and Estrada administrations.

Just days after it nullified the five contracts for Naia Terminal 3, the high court sustained its 2002 ruling declaring the joint venture agreement (JVA) between the Philippine Estates Authority and the Amari consortium null and void.

The high court ruled that the reclaimed land—almost 600 hectares in Manila Bay—could not be sold because these were "inalienable natural resources of the public domain," thus "outside the commerce of man."

"To allow vast areas of reclaimed lands of the public domain to be transferred to PEA as private lands will sanction a gross violation of the constitutional ban on private corporations from acquiring any kind of alienable land of the public domain," the SC said.

The deal, first negotiated during Ramos' time and renegotiated during the short-lived Estrada regime, was branded in 1996 by Senate President Ernesto Maceda as the "grandmother of all scams."

It involved the reclamation of 592.15 hectares of submerged areas of Manila Bay. But another 157.84 hectares on the Freedom Islands, also in Manila Bay, had already been reclaimed by the PEA under the deal, at a cost of P1.894 billion.

Former Solicitor General Frank Chavez, who filed the original petition with the SC to invalidate the JVA in 1998, yesterday hailed the decision, calling it "just."

HIGH COURT/ A19

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern and central Visayas and the whole Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/05/08/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

E-mail: pr_news@Inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Senate to probe tape of Piatco bribe plot

THE Senate decided yesterday to investigate the alleged attempt by Palace "operatives" to make money out of troubles of Philippine Air Terminals Co. whose contracts for the building of the new Naia Terminal 3 was nullified by the Supreme Court last Monday.

This came about after opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara delivered a privilege speech in which he revealed that he had a copy of a tape recording of an alleged discussion between officials of Fraport, the German partners of Piatco, and alleged Palace operatives to hatch a bribery scheme.

Angara made the speech in reaction to a report in a newspaper (not the INQUIRER) about the contents of the tape.

The report alleged that Arthur "Pancho" Villaraza, President Macapagal-Arroyo's lawyer, had asked for a $20 million fee from Fraport to "trouble-shoot" all the legal, judicial and other problems of Piatco while another Palace bloc allegedly demanded a $50 million fee to carry out the ouster of the Chengs, the Chinese-Filipino partners of the consortium.

"Let us not go gentle and soft on this case, the Senate has the responsibility to get to the bottom of this sordid case (which has given) our battered image another blow," Angara said.

But it's not clear which Senate committee would take on the case as Sen. Joker Arroyo has refused to have his blue ribbon committee handle the investigation.

Arroyo said that the committee wrapped up its hearings on the Piatco deal last year, adding that his committee had no jurisdiction over Villaraza who is not a public officer.

Senate President Franklin Drilon decided to give the blue ribbon committee time to study whether it can take on the case.

He said Angara's committee on constitutional amendments might want to handle the investigation.

ANGARA: Fleecing Piatco

The two committees both investigated the Piatco deal and recommended the nullification of the contract for being grossly disadvantageous to government. *Christine Avendaño*

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Reyes off to US again

DEFENSE Secretary Angelo Reyes left again for the United States on Tuesday, this time to pave the way for the state visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo this month.

It will be his second visit to the US this year. The first was in February.

PCGG welcomes SC seizure order on Imelda home

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The Presidential Commission on Good Government in Eastern Visayas (PCGG-8) yesterday welcomed the Supreme Court's resolution ordering the immediate seizure from former first lady Imelda Marcos and her family of the 45-hectare property in Tolosa town, Leyte.

Renoir Dauag, PCGG-8 regional representative, said the SC resolution was the instrument needed by the office to recover the property, which Ms Marcos claimed was the ancestral home of the Romualdezes in Barangay Olot, Tolosa.

"We can now enforce the order and repossess the Olot property," he said.

Dauag was referring to the temporary restraining order earlier issued by the SC to Ms Marcos instructing her to return the Olot property, which she ignored.

Ms Marcos told the INQUIRER last Friday that she would never let go of the Olot property, which she considered "sacred ground."

"They can kill me! I am not afraid. That is mine. That is a Romualdez property," she said. "It is there where my father was buried. It is sacred ground for me."

Dauag said he would first wait for instructions from the PCGG central office before implementing the high court's new order.

The INQUIRER tried to contact City Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez Sr., younger brother of the former first lady, to get his comment on the SC order but a secretary said he was in Manila.

Ms Marcos spent Friday night at the estate in Olot, about 25 kilometers southwest of this city.

The beachfront compound consists of residential and guest houses, a pavilion, a swimming pool, a 9-hole golf course and the Romualdez mausoleum.

In the heyday of the Marcos dictatorship, President Ferdinand Marcos and his wife had entertained jet-setter friends, among them foreign movie stars and members of the European royalty, at the Olot property.

Ms Marcos said the Romualdez family had owned the contested property long before her husband became president.

"Their claim has no basis. This was ours long before Marcos was born and became president," she said.

Ms Marcos said everybody in Leyte knew that the Romualdezes owned the Olot property. "It's about time they stopped harassing us and claiming Olot," she said.

The SC, in an en banc resolution dated April 28, ordered her and her clan to surrender "possession and control" of the Olot property to the PCGG.

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Cha-cha draft rules premature, says solon

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

HOUSE Minority Leader Carlos Padilla yesterday assailed the House leadership for the "highly premature and uncalled for" drafting of the rules for the constituent assembly ahead of a decision by the Senate whether to agree to the House-proposed charter change.

"It is not the business of the House or the Senate. It is the business of the constituent assembly," Padilla said.

He was criticizing the House committee on constitutional amendments which has produced a 14-page "draft rules" to govern the constituent assembly, the mode approved by the House plenary last March.

The Senate has yet to agree to the proposal. The Senate committee on constitutional amendments, headed by Sen. Edgardo Angara, was set to meet on Monday to decide whether to endorse an assembly or a constitutional convention to the floor.

Padilla said the rush in drafting the assembly rules betray a "sinister plan" by Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. to railroad the process of Charter change.

"JDV is hell bent on railroading Charter change and constituent assembly because his No. 1 agenda is No-El (no election in 2004)," Padilla said.

De Venecia had repeatedly denied charter change would derail the presidential elections next year.

"We again reiterate that there will be elections," he said after meeting senators the other day. He said charges that the elections would be cancelled were only intrigues by those who do not want charter change to take place for their own personal interest.

But De Venecia said the scheduled elections could be for the planned parliamentary form of government, which will include a President and members of Parliament who will in turn elect the Prime Minister.

But Padilla said: "I do not trust De Venecia. I do not trust the constituent assembly because once it is there, who knows what will happen?"

He said it would be "very tempting" for the incumbent officials to postpone the elections to prolong their stay in power.

GMA ignores House Cha-cha moves

IF PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo knows what Congress is up to lately, she is not showing it.

At a meeting with leaders of the Senate and House of Representatives yesterday, Ms Macapagal chose to ignore their top concern nowadays—Charter change.

She convened the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac) to discuss the 10 "priority bills" she wants Congress to pass before it adjourns on June 6.

The snowballing move in Congress to amend the Constitution was not included in the agenda.

"The subject (of Charter change) was never brought up," spokesperson Ignaco Bunye afterwards said.

House Speaker Jose de Venecia, the principal proponent of Charter change, was at the meeting.

Ms Macapagal has dropped her objection to amending the constitution at this time.

But she said she is leaving the debate up to Congress.

With only 16 session days left before Congress adjourns on June 6, lawmakers are preoccupying themselves with the matter of Charter change.

Asked if the President raised the concern that the Charter change debate is delaying the passage of other priority bills, Bunye repeated that the President preferred to stay "neutral" on the issue.

Meanwhile Ms Macapagal yesterday responded to speculations that she favors Charter amendments because this will postpone the May 2004 presidential elections.

"One thing is (as) sure as the sun rises in the morning—there will be elections in May 2004 under a cleaner, modernized electoral process that is part of the legacy of this administration," the President said in a statement.

Bunye told reporters that the President would insist that the elections push through next year even if Congress agrees to postpone it to give way to Charter amendments.

"She would insist the elections would be held. You can also hold me on to that," Bunye said.

Asked if the elections would be for a presidential or parliamentary form of government, Bunye laughed.

"There will be elections in 2004," he said.

The Ledac yesterday agreed that its priority bills are the ones on anti-trafficking in minors and women; pay increase for the judiciary; anti-SARS quarantine program; use of farmland as loan collateral; excise tax on automobiles; anti-terrorism act; reorganizing the Video Regulatory Board into the Optical Media Board; rationalizing the documentary stamp tax; the water bill and the debt cap bill.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

BIR execs revamped

By Clarissa Batino

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue yesterday said it has started a reorganization to strengthen tax administration and sustain the rising trend in collection, a move that in the past was strongly resisted by the bureaucracy.

BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said he was confident his revamp would not be resisted by employees.

"We have started a reorganization to sustain our improving revenue performance. We have to put people where they would be most effective," said the BIR chief.

Affected in the first wave of revamp are 13 senior officials. While Parayno said these were mostly lateral movements, some were obviously demotions.

For instance, Assistant Commissioner Edwin Abella was transferred from the Large Taxpayer Service to become regional director of Quezon City in place of Danilo Duncano who was brought to head the San Pablo City regional office.

Assistant Commissioner Lirio Cabsaba or the Collection Service was made regional director of Bacolod City in place of Sonia Flores who was temporarily assigned to the Office of the Commissioner until she was given a new assignment.

Parayno said Flores was removed from Bacolod after the bureau suffered a decline in tax collection from the sugar industry.

"I talked to each of them to make sure that they understand why they are being transferred. We all want what is best for the BIR and we need this reorganization to achieve more gains," said Parayno.

Deputy Commissioner Estelita Aguirre transferred from the Large Taxpayer Service from Resource Management Group. Aguirre was responsible for the intensive audit initiated by the bureau last year and Parayno said he wanted the same results for the large taxpayers group.

Also transferred were regional director Lucien Sayuno from San Pablo City to Makati City, Assistant Commissioner Norma Lipana as office in charge of the Resource Management Group, Marietta Lorenzo as assistant commissioner of Policy Planning Service, Virginia Trinidad as assistant commissioner of Collection Service.

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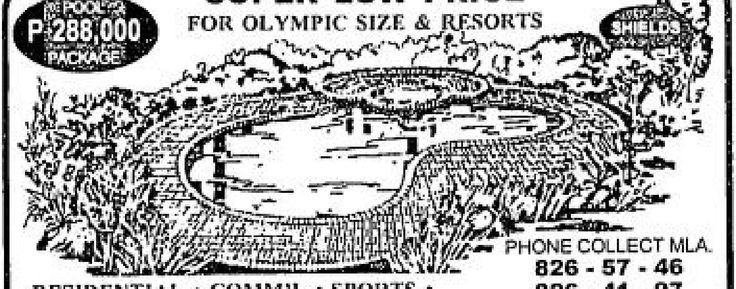

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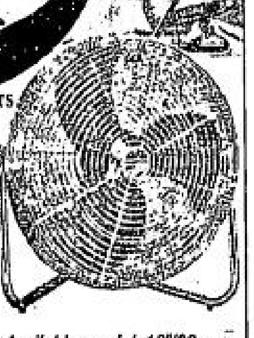

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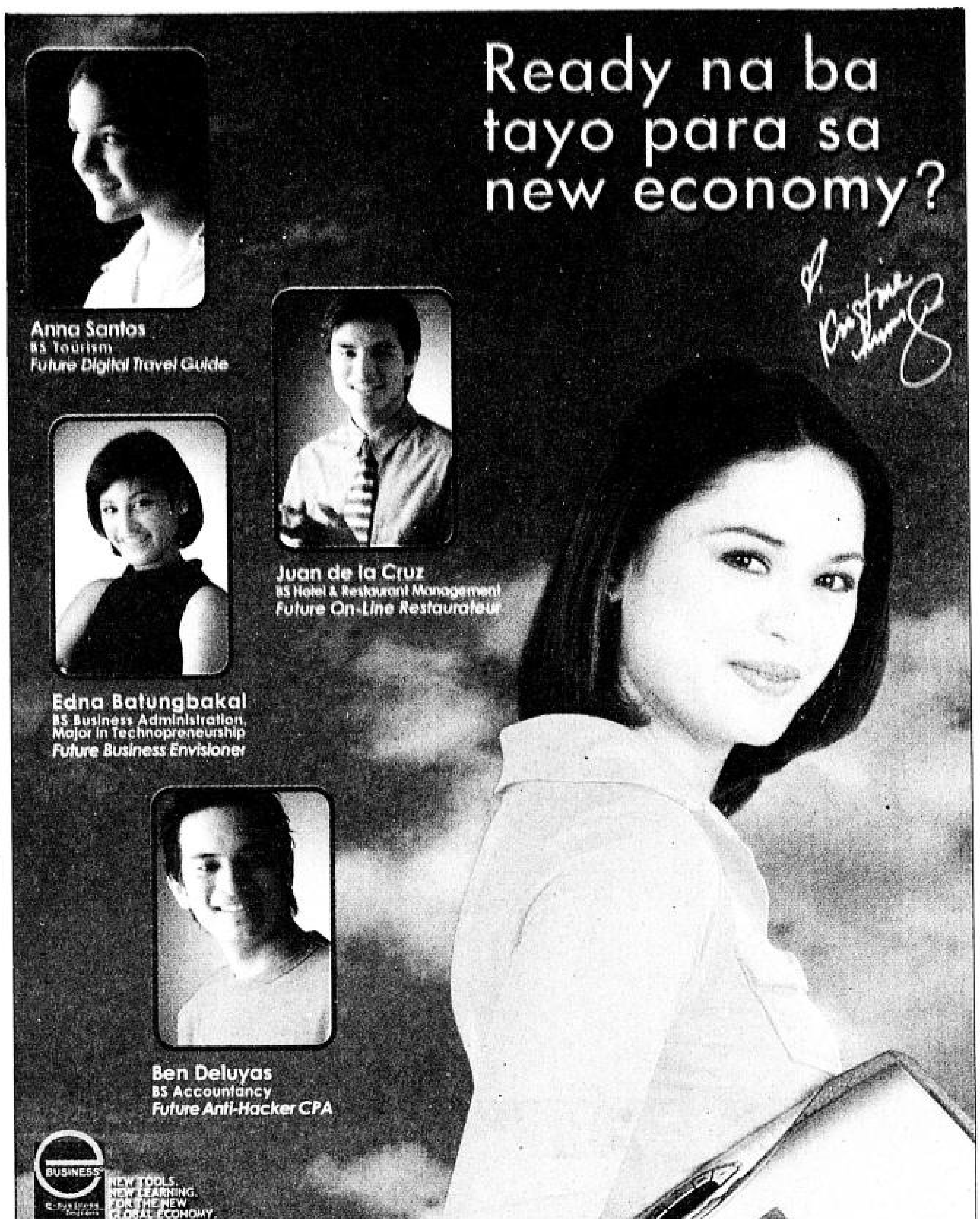

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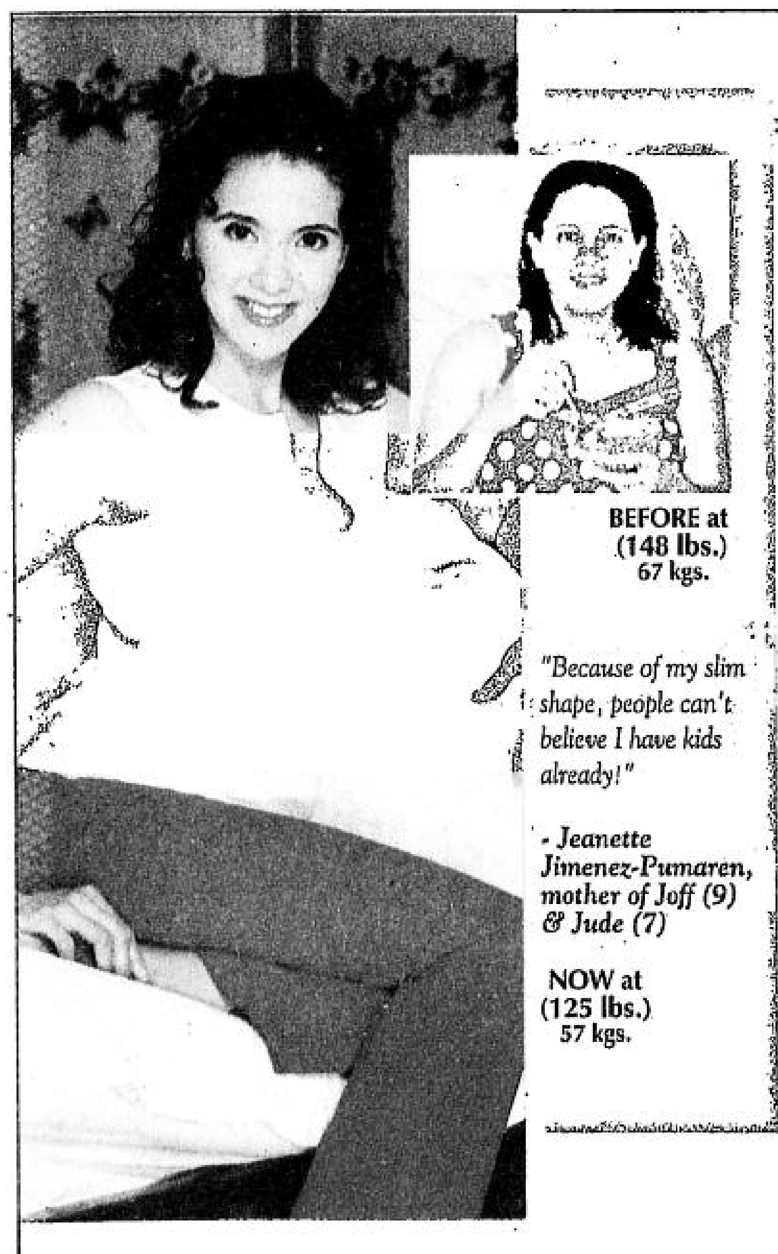

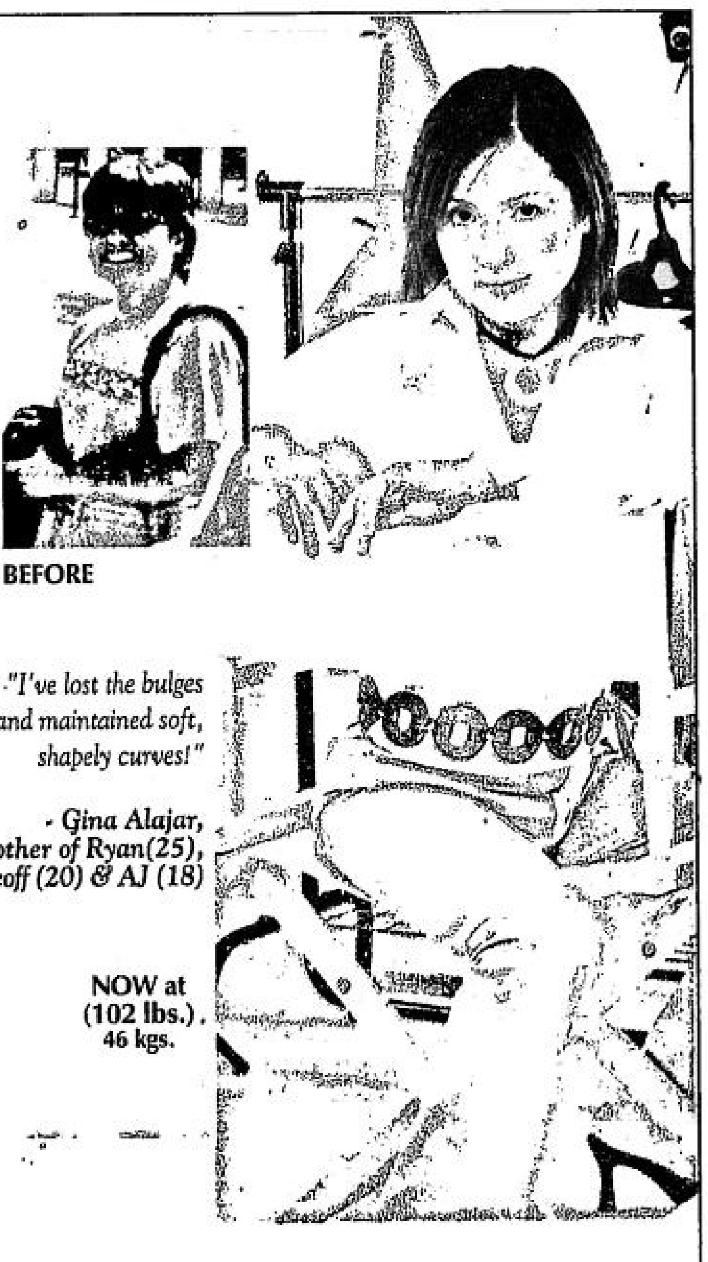

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Sin asks priests to help stop hysteria on SARS

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AP CARDINAL SIN

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DOH aiming for SARS-free declaration

By Armand N. Nocum

THE HEALTH department is aiming to get a "SARS-free" declaration even as it reported that two new suspected SARS cases have been brought to the San Lazaro Hospital, bringing the total SARS suspects in the country to 60.

Meanwhile, the head of the National Epidemiology Center said people need not fear a "relapse" in the report that seven more persons—six of whom were exposed to the Catalons—have come down with SARS symptoms.

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According to her, the WHO standard provides that if after 20 days a country shall have prevented further local transmission of the SARS cases, then a country can be removed from the list of SARS-infected countries.

So far, only Vietnam has succeeded in doing so.

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STOP SARS ATTACK SARS DOH OFFICIAL ADVISORY

THURSDAY 8 May 2003

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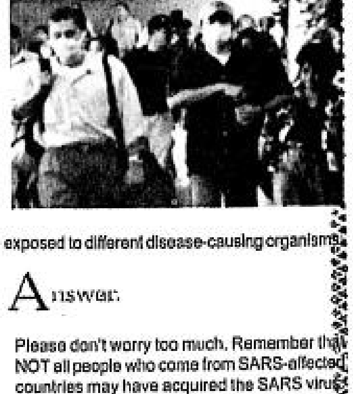

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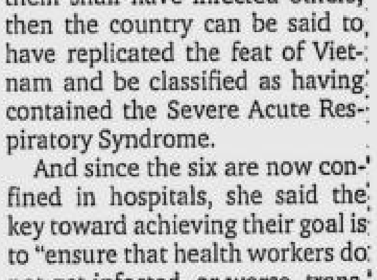

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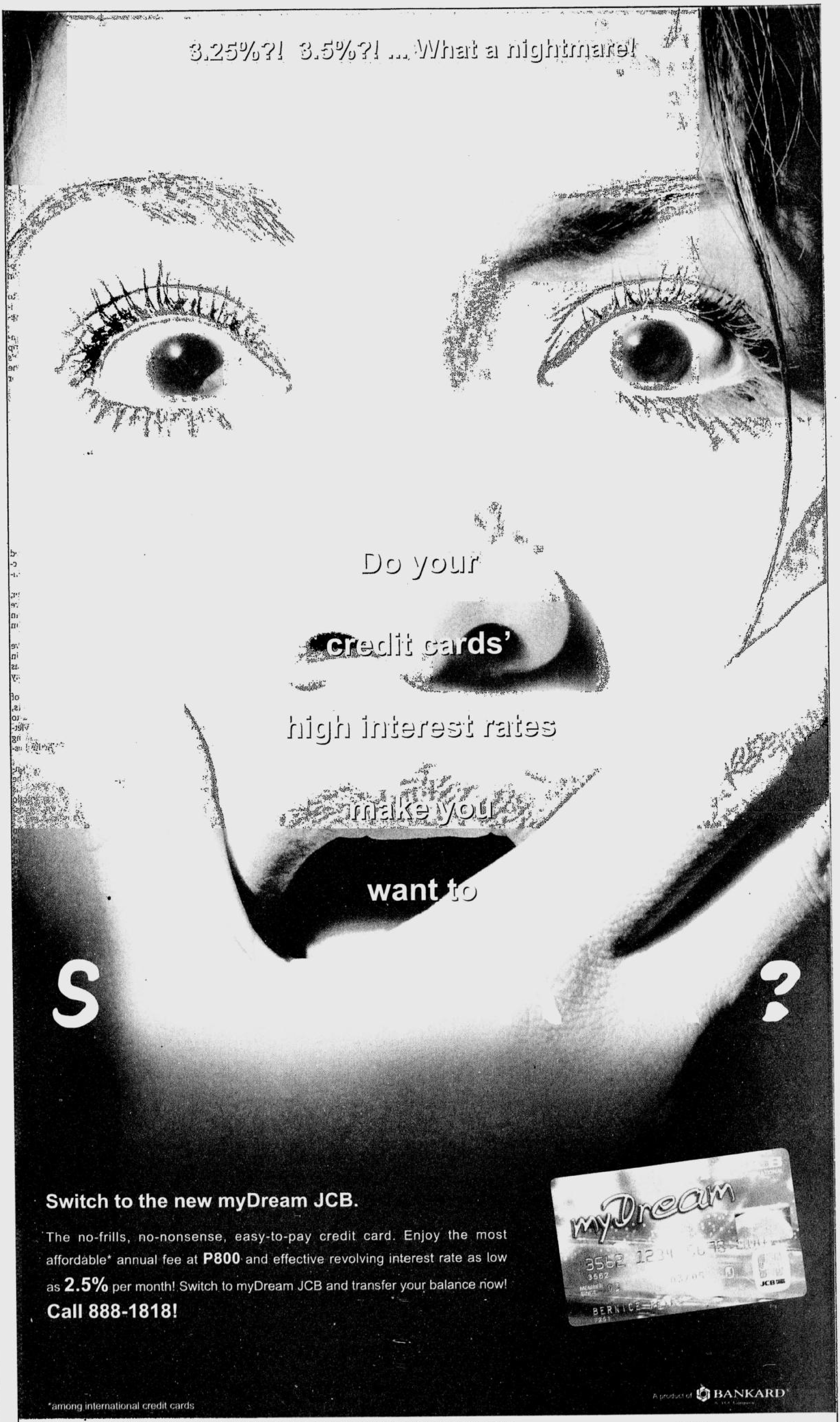
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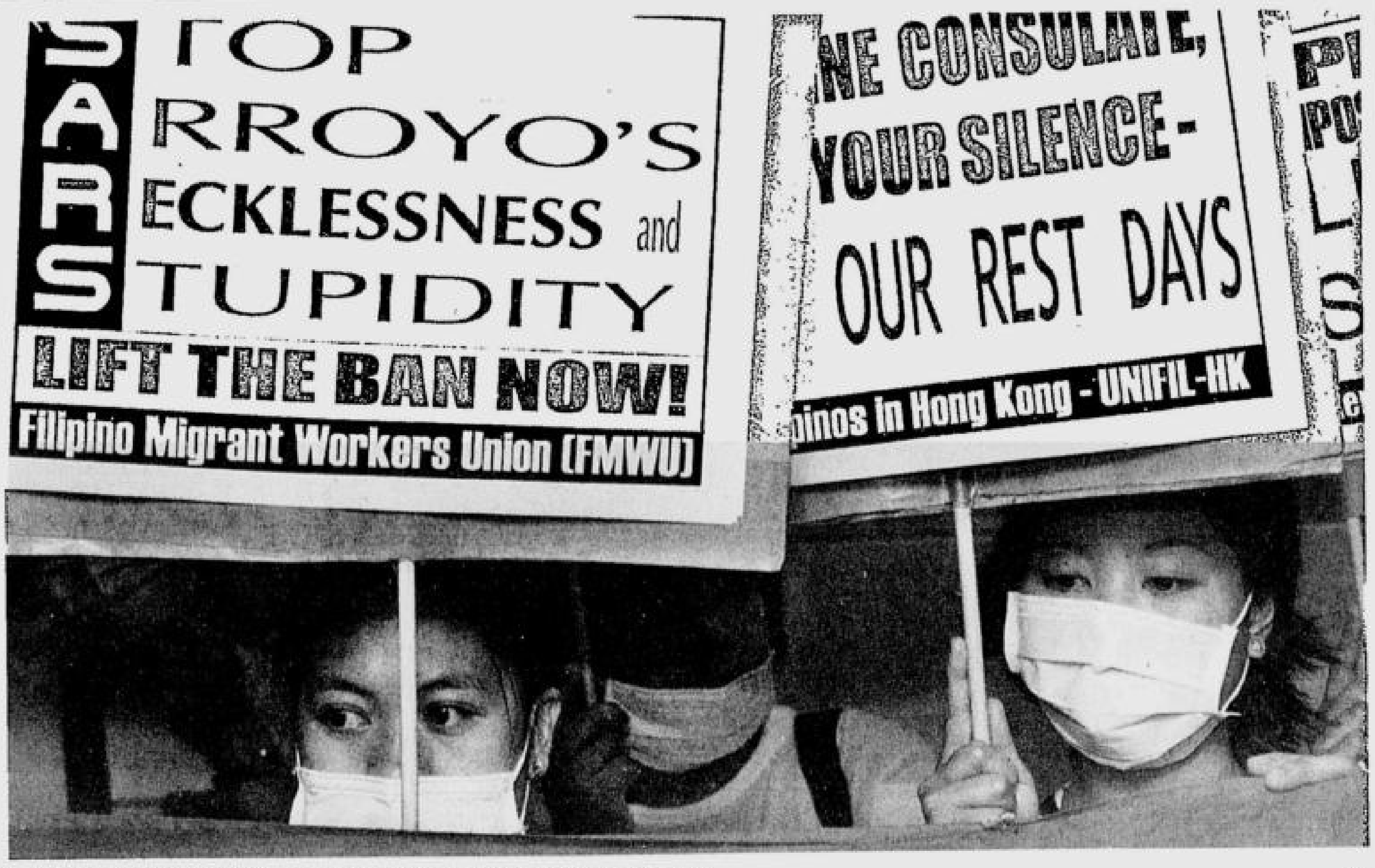
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MASKED PROTEST: Filipinos in Hong Kong make their feelings known. AP

Pinoys protest HK travel ban for OFWs

HONG KONG—A Filipino domestic worker's group demanded on Wednesday that the Philippine government lift its ban on workers going to Hong Kong due to the SARS crisis.

Members from the United Filipinos (Unifil) in Hong Kong and Filipino Migrant Workers Union (FMWU) demonstrated at the Philippine consulate general here demanding the lifting of the ban, which has halted the processing of contracts for workers bound for Hong Kong—one of the areas hardest hit by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Emman Villanueva, secretary general for Unifil, said, "The ban is creating difficulties for migrant workers in Hong Kong," adding it has gravely affected "the lives of thousands of Filipinos, and thousands more of their dependents, whose only option to survive is to work abroad."

According to a letter sent to Unifil, the ban took effect on April 25 on the order of the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency, which issued a memorandum for the immediate suspension of deployment in Hong Kong due to SARS.

Albert Laconsay, president of FMWU, said that it is not only current workers who are affected by the ban.

"Now, even those who have prematurely terminated contracts are worried over the security of their employment. Even if they find a new employer, they have to go back to the Philippines first. They are not being allowed to come back . . . thus endangering their livelihood," he said.

At least one Filipina maid died in Hong Kong of SARS last month. So far, Hong Kong has reported a total of 193 SARS fatalities from 1,646 infections.

The majority of Hong Kong's 240,000 foreign domestic helpers are from the Philippines, with Indonesia and Thailand also contributing significant numbers. *AFP*

PREEMPTING RP GOV'T

US envoy hit for interference

By Christine O. Avendaño, Philip C. Tubeza and Juliet Labog-Javellana

LEGISLATORS yesterday denounced United States Ambassador Francis Ricciardone for allegedly interfering in the internal affairs of the Philippines by declaring that the US was considering declaring the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front a terrorist group.

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"What Murad said is true. I would like to inform the MILF that the government is not stopping the investigation. The government knows that not all incidents in Mindanao are perpetrated by MILF. At the same time, the government knows that there is a third group that wants to destroy the government's efforts at bringing peace and development in Mindanao," Gonzales said. *AFP with a report from Rosa May V. de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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From page A1

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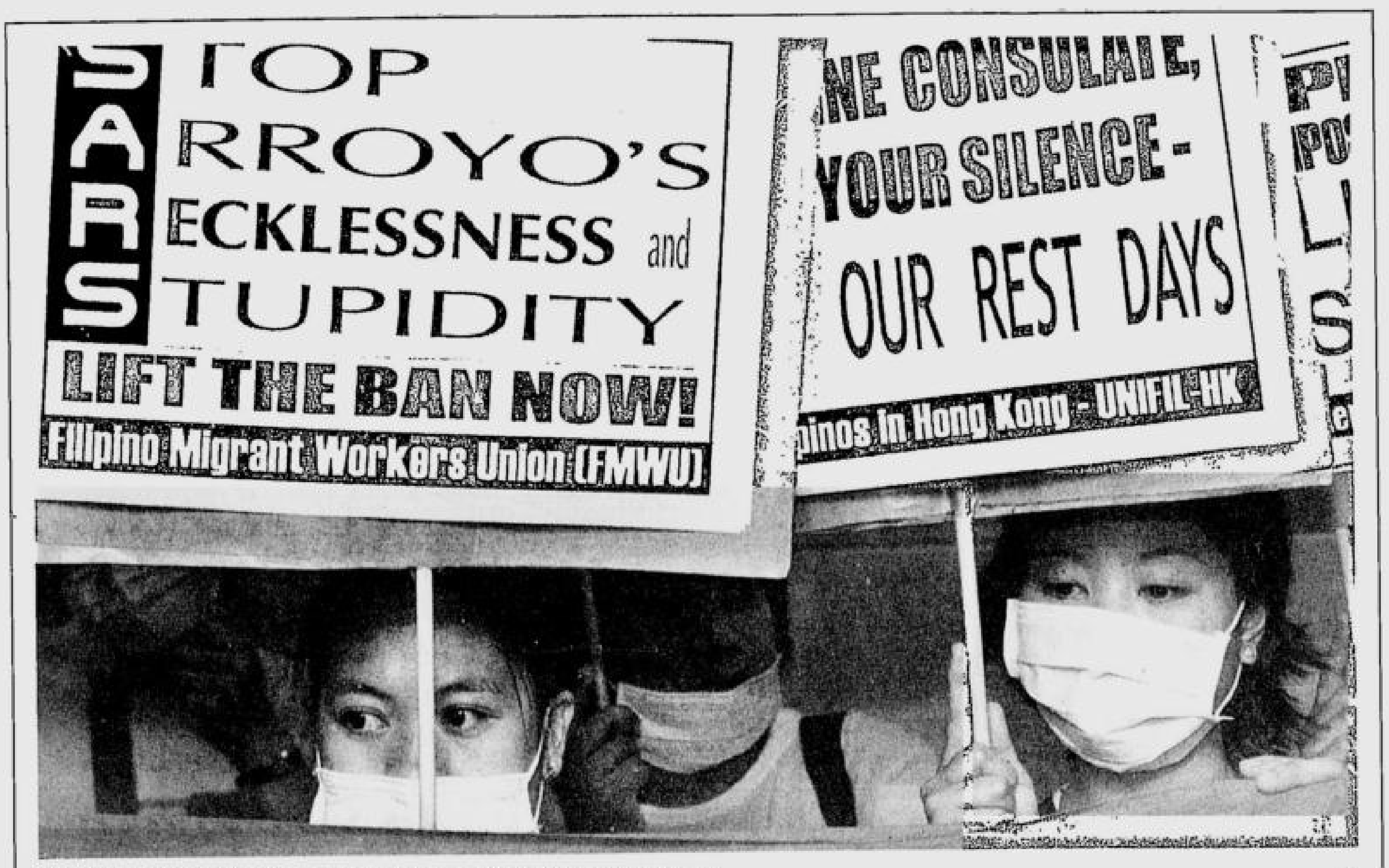
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pinos in Hong Kong - UNIFIL-HK

MASKED PROTEST: Filipinos in Hong Kong make their feelings known. AP

Pinoys protest HK travel ban for OFWs

HONG KONG—A Filipino domestic worker's group demanded on Wednesday that the Philippine government lift its ban on workers going to Hong Kong due to the SARS crisis.

Members from the United Filipinos (Unifil) in Hong Kong and Filipino Migrant Workers Union (FMWU) demonstrated at the Philippine consulate general here demanding the lifting of the ban, which has halted the processing of contracts for workers bound for Hong Kong—one of the areas hardest hit by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Emman Villanueva, secretary general for Unifil, said, "The ban is creating difficulties for migrant workers in Hong Kong," adding it has gravely affected "the lives of thousands of Filipinos, and thousands more of their dependents, whose only option to survive is to work abroad."

According to a letter sent to Unifil, the ban took effect on April 25 on the order of the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency, which issued a memorandum for the immediate suspension of deployment in Hong Kong due to SARS.

Albert Laconsay, president of FMWU, said that it is not only current workers who are affected by the ban.

"Now, even those who have prematurely terminated contracts are worried over the security of their employment. Even if they find a new employer, they have to go back to the Philippines first. They are not being allowed to come back . . . thus endangering their livelihood," he said.

At least one Filipina maid died in Hong Kong of SARS last month. So far, Hong Kong has reported a total of 193 SARS fatalities from 1,646 infections.

The majority of Hong Kong's 240,000 foreign domestic helpers are from the Philippines, with Indonesia and Thailand also contributing significant numbers. *AFP*

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PREEMPTING RP GOV'T

US envoy hit for interference

By Christine O. Avendaño, Philip C. Tubeza and Juliet Labog-Javellana

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Solon bares anomalies in emission testing at LTO

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

HOUSE Deputy Minority Leader Gilbert Remulla yesterday charged that the implementation of the Clean Air Act has become the source of "wholesale graft and corruption."

The Cavite congressman accused the Land Transportation Office of conniving with fixers, insurance agents and operators of Private Emission Testing Centers (PETC) to turn Republic Act 8749 into their milking cow.

Remulla said that certain PETC operators have been issuing Certificates of Environmental Compliance (CECs) outside of their designated areas of accreditation in violation of a joint order between the trade and transportation departments.

He said some PETC operators were also issuing CECs without even conducting actual smoke emission testing, thus contributing to more air pollution.

"This anomaly apparently occurs with much regularity that the net effect is the proliferation of 'no shows' or 'non-appearance' in the emission testing," Remulla said.

He said a 'no show' privilege was being sold by PETC operators to vehicle owners who pay P700 to P1,000 instead of the regular fee of P300.

"These anomalous practices are being condoned by the LTO obviously because some of its officials are receiving bribes from erring PETCs," he said.

He cited the case in his district in Imus where he said LTO district officer Federico Quitain has authenticated and accepted CECs despite clear knowledge that some of them were issued by PETCs which were not accredited or authorized.

Rice farmers getting better deal, says NFA

RICE farmers are getting better income from their summer harvest or *palagad* crop, whether they sell their palay to NFA or to private grains traders, according to the National Food Authority.

This is because the buying price of traders for palay approximates and at times even exceeds the government support price, it said.

NFA Administrator Arthur C. Yap said the NFA has increased its buying price for palay from P9 to P10 per kilogram for the *palagad* harvest. This, he said in a press statement, excludes the P50 per kg incentives for the drying transport and cooperative development fund given to farmer organizations selling to NFA.

Individual farmers, on the other hand, can sell at an effective price of P10.25 per kg for their produce while the remaining P.25 will accrue to the cooperative where they are members for post harvest facility buildup fund.

As of the second week of April, the commercial ex-farm price of palay averaged at P9.54 per kg nationwide, the NFA said. Central Visayas registered a high P 10.30 per kg palay buying price while the Ilocos and Central Luzon Regions posted P9.92 and P9.91 per kg, respectively.

Other regions that registered a relatively high ex-farm price of palay this cropping season are Southern Tagalog at P9.80 per kg; followed by Western Visayas at P9.77 and Western Mindanao at P9.69 per kg.

This means that the high buying price of NFA serves as a "price pull" mechanism and a bench mark for traders, which augurs well for our rice farmers, Yap said. The NFA also serves as alternative market for the farmers where they can sell their produce at a better price, he added.

While the high ex-farm price of palay may deter the NFA from meeting its procurement target for the first quarter, Yap stressed that even with limited funds, the NFA is effectively fulfilling its mandate of influencing the ex-farm price of palay to move to levels that give the farmers better income and fair return on their investments.

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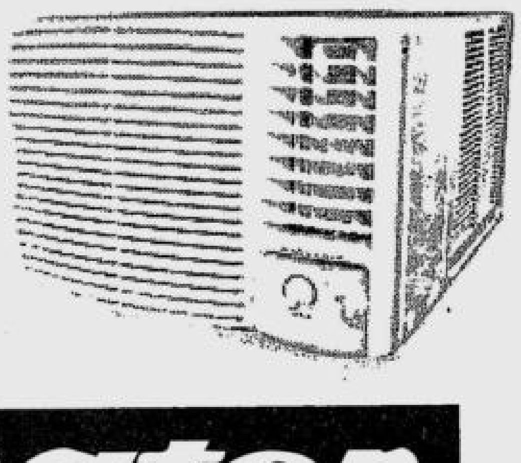

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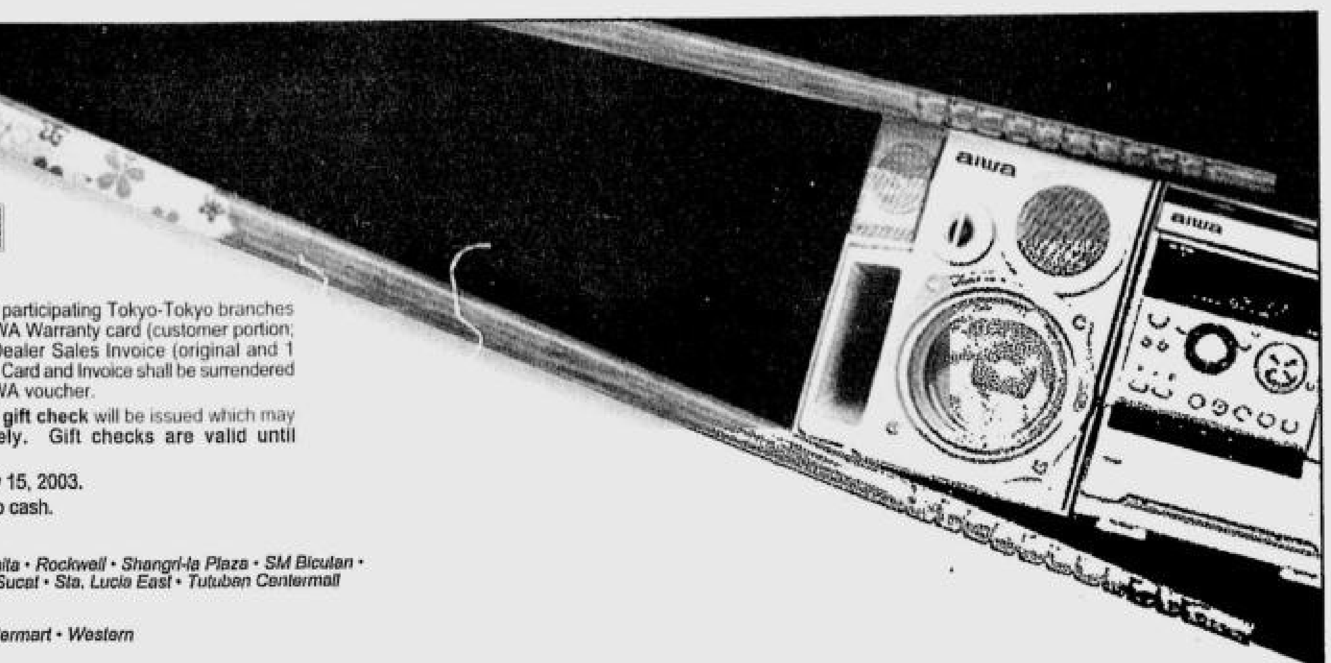

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Eugenia D. Apostol
Founding Chairman

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Tainted contracts

EDITORIAL

IN HIS separate concurring opinion to the Supreme Court's decision declaring null and void all five contracts awarded to Piatco to build and operate Naia Terminal 3, Justice Artemio Panganiban went farther than the decision. He said that the contracts were "replete with outright violations of law, public policy and the Constitution," justifying their nullification and suggested that the officers of Piatco and public officials who signed the contracts ought to be prosecuted and given the "stiffest sanctions permissible under the law."

Panganiban took pains to point out the fraudulent magnitude of the contracts. He said the 1997 Concession Agreement and the four contracts that amended it during the Estrada administration contained "provisions that tended to establish a monopoly, require disbursements of public funds sans appropriations, and provide government guarantees in violation of statutory prohibitions, as well as other provisions equally offensive to law, public policy and the Constitution. Public interests will inevitably affected thereby."

His opinion underlined two important themes. First, Piatco and the bidder for the terminal which was shut out of the transaction—Asia's Emerging Dragons Corp. which was organized by five taipans—should be disqualified from tendering bids to operate services in the terminal. With regard to Piatco, Panganiban said, "Despite all the insidious contraventions of the Constitution, law and public policy Piatco perpetrated, keeping Piatco on as concessionaire and even rewarding it by allowing it to operate and profit from Terminal III—instead of imposing upon it the stiffest sanctions permissible under the laws—is unconscionable." But he added that the nullification of the Piatco contracts should not make AEDC automatically the winning bidder and that it should not be allowed to operate the facility. Instead he called for a new bidding on the airport-related services and suggested that the operations be put in the hands of a new organization, while emphasizing that reasonable compensation should be given to Piatco and its partners.

This opinion is fair. While the main decision allows the government to take over temporarily, finish the terminal and organize the distribution of concessions, Panganiban's opinion seeks to avert the possibility that in the new round of bidding, corruption attending the cancelled contracts might be replaced by a new corruption of Palace cronies.

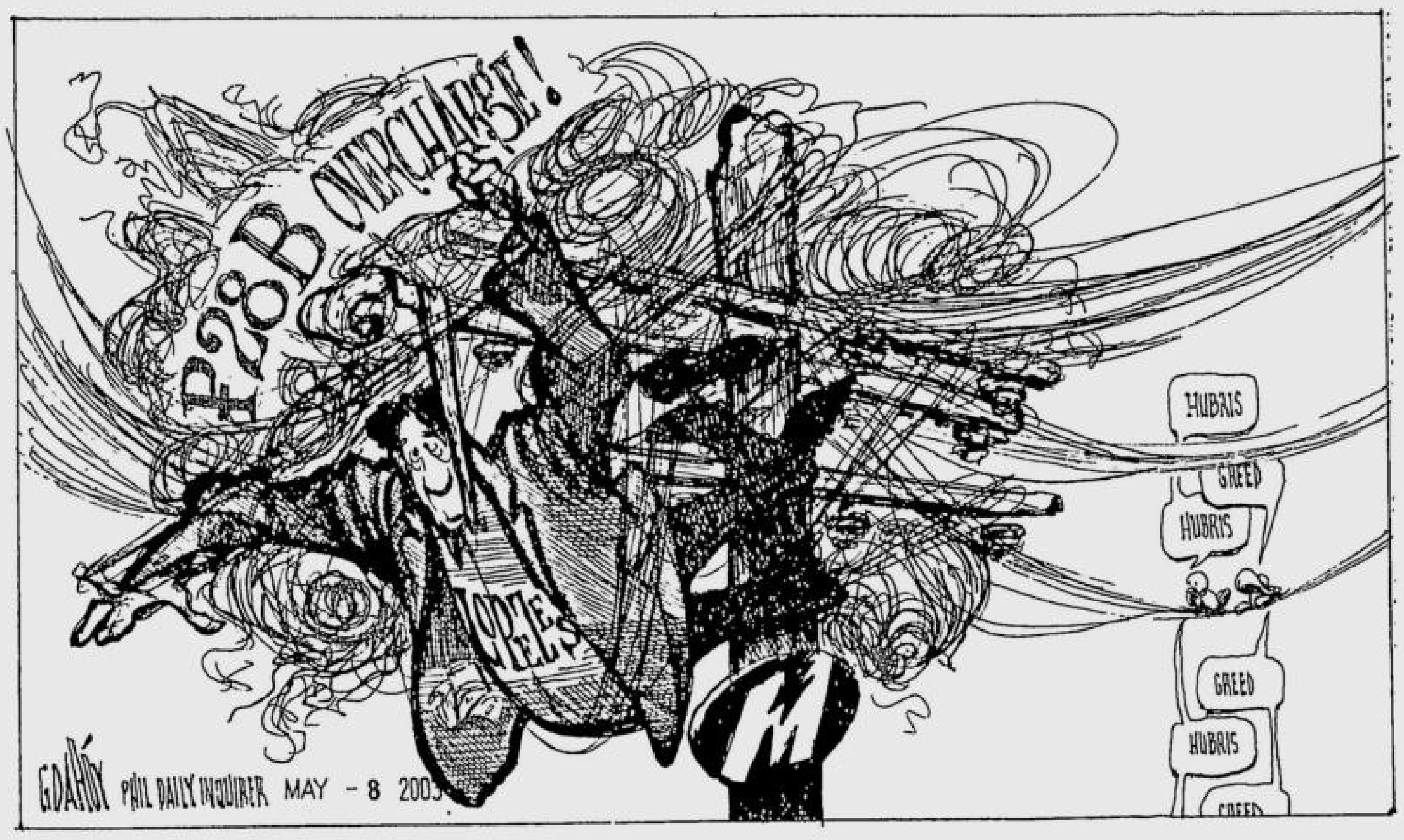
Having won a decisive test of its commitment to fight corruption and monopolistic arrangements, the Macapagal administration should be aware that if the redistribution of concessions will be stained by irregularities and unfairness, it will squander completely the moral and political ascendancy that it has gained from the Court's decision.

An independent presidential task force, composed of individuals above suspicion, should be created to handle the temporary stewardship of the terminal instead of leaving everything in the hands of Transportation Secretary Larry Mendoza and Manila Airport Authority officials. This is the right move since it will remove suspicions that the removal of Piatco has given opportunity for people close to the administration to sew up the concessions.

The Court's main decision emphasized that it wanted to establish a level playing field for business. Thus, it is hard to understand the view of the Makati Business Club that the decision violates the principle of sanctity of contracts and muddles the official policy on privatization and free enterprise.

After examining the facts of the case, the Court decisively concluded that the contracts were riddled with irregularities and onerous provisions favoring Piatco. What sanctity then can be found in such contracts? Illegal provisions cannot be a basis for conducting business or even public policy, the Court said in effect. With the monopolistic advantages accruing to Piatco after the amendments that departed from the original intentions of the build-transfer-and-operate concept, how can the MBC defend such a corruption-ridden contract?

German businessmen know better the real issues in the case which is the fundamental fairness of transactions. The Court emphasized this principle. Fraport and other German investors are happy with the decision because it reinforces the principle of transparency in business transactions. The MBC has a muddled view of the decision.



GDAÑOY PHIL DAILY INQUIRER MAY - 8 2003

Three tenors should shift to show biz

ISN'T it a relief to learn that the three Filipino tenors can do something better than be Cabinet members? They are definitely better singers than Cabinet secretaries.

"*Ayun pala at marunong kumanta, bakit nagpipilit sa gobyerno?*" quipped a perfumed matron in the audience at the Manila Hotel Tuesday evening.

Well, now that they know that they can earn a living by singing, let's hope the three tenors will shift to show biz and leave governance to those who know how to do it. After all, showbiz people are going into politics, so it's time for politicians to return the compliment. Carreras, Domingo and Pavarotti have nothing to worry about, but let us encourage our own trio to continue singing anyway. Maybe that will prevent them from running for the Senate.

With the exception of MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, the people have about given up on the tenors. They have held so many government positions but until now we cannot point at anything they have done for the good of the country. Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes was a soldier, Armed Forces chief of staff and now defense boss. Now he wants to be a senator. But what has he done?

Interior Secretary Joey Lina used to be a senator, governor and now DILG secretary, and he also wants to return to the Senate. But what was his contribution as a senator? He has become notorious for one piece of legislation, the Urban Development and Housing Act, better known as the Lina Law, which was railroaded through the Senate during a *sine die* session after midnight when there was no more quorum (the same way the resolution for convening a constituent assembly was railroaded through the House of Representatives).

The Lina Law has done more damage to property rights and made the squatting problem a hundred times worse than any other piece of legislation in history. Lina has been immortalized because of that. Singing his way to fame may not even be able to erase that opprobrium.

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

But now that we know why the three tenors have not been working so hard in their offices for several weeks (they were rehearsing), shouldn't we forgive them for that? And Fernando probably chucked the secretaryship of the Department of Public Works and Highways to give him more time to rehearse. Now that they know that Fernando can sing well, perhaps the sidewalk vendors can forgive him for driving them out of the sidewalks. After all, music is supposed to soothe the savage beast, and the three have proven that they can make beautiful music. Why don't they stick to music?

* * *

I am lining up in favor of the Supreme Court decision nullifying the Piatco contract for the construction of Naia Terminal 3. Some businessmen, particularly Guillermo Luz of the Makati Business Club, protested that the decision puts into question the sanctity of contracts in the country and sends the wrong signals to foreign investors. On the contrary, I think the decision strengthened the sanctity of contracts. The signal sent by the Supreme Court is that you cannot monkey around with contracts and get away with it.

The original Piatco contract was mangled, amended and changed so much that the final version bears little resemblance to the original. There was no more contract to sanctify because by changing the original contract so much, the greedy conspirators overdid it and effectively nullified the contract.

The Court could not have upheld the Piatco contract; that would have opened the floodgates to more anomalies and corruption.

A favorable decision would have allowed bidders to bid low just to win a bidding and then later amend the contract to increase the price and insert provisions more favorable to them. In fact, that has been done and is being done in many government contracts. That was how the price of the infamous President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard ballooned to hundreds of millions. That was how the two water concessionaires in Metro Manila and environs were able to illegally raise their rates. They bid low to win the bidding, then using excuses such as force majeure and inserting other charges, they have been raising rates although the original contract stipulated that there would be no increase for the first five years. But the rates have now more than doubled. That was how the PEA-Amari and Centennial Expo scams were perpetrated—by amending the original terms of the contract.

Every contract awarded by the government, whether by the DPWH or some other government agency, is never finished at the original price. Every contract has an escalation clause. And as soon as the contractor begins work he starts to ask for a series of increases under one pretext or another. The lowest bid become meaningless. That bid price is never followed anyway. So that the whole intent of a bidding is rendered moot. The winning contractor, using bribery, influence and legal gobbledygook, still collects the higher price that he wants despite his low bid.

The mistake of the Piatco conspirators is that they became too greedy. Confident that they would get away with it because government officials were their cohorts, they amended the contract not just once but several times and changed the terms so much that the Supreme Court finally had to put its foot down.

Let's hope that from now on, the sanctity and intent of original contracts will be respected.

Ads

I REMEMBER reading a week or so ago about a congressman who wanted to protest the Addict Mobile ads, or indeed the product itself. The name of the product, the congressman said, takes the sting out of drug abuse or even makes it "in" or "cool." The ads themselves exploit the presumed pleasures and wonders of drug abuse, which cannot possibly help to deter the youth from trying it. Though the ads ultimately reveal the source of the addiction to be mobile-phone (ab)use, they pose a danger to impressionable youth by extolling drug culture.

I myself am normally oblivious to ads. I don't know why, but when I read newspapers or watch TV, I can't see the ads or remember them even at the level of the subconscious, where these things reside. Talk of selective perception. Until I read about the congressman protesting them, I didn't know the Addict ads existed. When I asked my kid about it, he was astonished and wondered how on earth I could have missed them when they appeared all the time on Solar Sports in-between the NBA games.

I've seen the ads since, in the newspapers as well as on TV. I'm not too greatly distressed by it. The youth may be impressionable, but I figure they are still capable of drawing the line between one form of addiction and another. I think it would take more than ads like this to demolish all barriers. I did ask my 14-year-old kid if the ads made him curious about drugs, or less averse to trying them. He answered, "Are you kidding me?" In Tagalog, it sounded more like, "Are you insane"?

As addiction goes, I'd worry more about the cigarette ads, which do encourage addiction. The Marlboro man, the fellow in the ad who died of lung cancer from smoking, said it best: "Smoking is not a habit, it is an addiction. It is as real an addiction as addiction to heroin." In the United States, those ads are now banned, courtesy of vigilant and feisty consumer groups. The last time I was there, they had been replaced by huge billboards proclaiming in shrill tones the infinite dangers of smoking. Yet cigarette ads continue to proliferate in this

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

country. And they do encourage the young to smoke.

If any ad deserves a howl of protest against it, that is it. But it would take a congressman who can be blind to Lucio Tan's blandishments to do it.

The experience has since made me a little more alert to ads. Over the past couple of weeks, I myself have been incensed by two of them. Ironically, they are the ones most everyone would find innocuous. But they are by far the more insidious.

One of them, shown also in-between the NBA playoff games, is the Growee ad. It advertises itself as having the nutrients to make kids not just grow but grow tall. It leaves no doubt about the presumed virtue of tallness. It is not just that the ad appears in basketball games, it is that it says so forthrightly. It depicts a basketball player dunking a ball with ease and a boy, flushed with awe and adoration, vowing, "*Pag laki ko, tatangkad din ako* (When I grow up, I will just be as tall)." The ad concludes: "*Ang matangkad bida* (Tall stands out)."

The insidious part there is that many Filipinos will agree with it. I protested this before when someone proposed in a letter to the editor last year, after the World Basketball Games where the United States did not finish first as expected, that we embark on growing tall players so we could also have a crack at those games. That, I said, was the tail wagging the dog. If the problem was that we could not win international, or even intraregional, basketball meets because we had relatively short players, the solution was **not** to grow extra tall players, which had all the earmarks of Hitler's favorite sport—genetic engineering—it was to change sports. Soccer, which did not require height and which had more following worldwide, was an easy choice. Look how far South Korea got in the last World Cup games.

But the idea is not merely silly, it is pernicious. The concept of "*ang matangkad bida*" is a horrendously colonial one. You will not find any other Southeast Asian country advocating it. It insults the natural attributes of Filipinos and suggests implicitly that "*ang pandak kawawa*" (short is pitiful) or short is ugly. That is what most of us are: short. Or since short is a relative concept, not as tall as other races. But as the rabbit taught the giraffe, tall may reach up to the trees on the other side of the wall, but short can always squeeze through the hole in the wall to get to the other side.

The other ad is related to this. That is the skin-whitening products.

I had thought for a while they had disappeared from the market but that is not so at all. I do not now recall their brands but I saw a couple of them last weekend being advertised in the newspapers and on TV. The ads quite openly suggested that a white skin was beautiful, thereby suggesting as well that a dark skin was not. The latter is what most of us have, skin bronzed by the sun. The insidious part there, too, is that most Filipinos will agree with the ads' message. I still remember Ruffa Gutierrez's handlers demanding to know many years ago how she could possibly have lost the Miss World crown to a *negra*. The irony, of course, is that white folk spend a fortune tanning themselves in beaches and in manmade heating machines to get what we already have.

I imagine if there was a product that promised to lengthen and sharpen noses without surgery, it would be aggressively advertised and sold to us.

These are the ads I'd worry more about. Some addictions are worse than others and encouraging them truly bodes ill for this country. The addiction to mental slavery is first among them.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@info.com.ph

Bitter-sweet days for Frank Chavez

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE ADMINISTRATION is naturally delirious that the Supreme Court voided overwhelmingly the Piatco contract to build Naia Terminal 3, paving the way for a government takeover. But it's hard for the administration to gloat, considering it had a hand in changing the contract and its supplementary amendments. Signed during the Ramos era, Piatco's BOT contract underwent revisions during Estrada's time, where the so-called onerous provisions were made. But the Macapagal administration approved the third supplement and already received some P780 million as payment from Piatco: P180 million for relocating the Philippine Air Force and P300 million every year for two years. Also, acting Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio in October 2002 dismissed three criminal cases against transportation officials and Piatco chair Cheng Yong, thus upholding in no uncertain terms the validity of the Piatco contract.

* * *

The Piatco project must be one of the most ill-fated business ventures in the history of this country. Ironically all three administrations had upheld the validity of the contract at various stages. Despite the insistence of administration drumbeaters that the recent SC decision voiding the contract did not hurt investor confidence, the fact is that it will, especially since the various administrations put their stamp of approval on the contract. The Makati Business Club have also expressed worry about the sanctity of contracts in this country.

* * *

We citizens can only hope that with the SC ruling, a clear resolution of the Piatco conflict will see the new terminal, which is now 98 percent finished, operating, especially since it's "Visit The Philippines Year." But I have a feeling we have not seen the end of this controversy, for the government will have to compensate the builders for their expenses and it is broke at the moment.

Then, too, the government says its takeover will be temporary and it will re-bid the project soon. The public perception, however, is that, as Piatco lawyer Francisco Chavez put it, an unseen hand is manipulating the takeover for another interested party. What lingers in the memory is the alleged threat of taipan Lucio Tan to Cheng Yong after the former's firm lost in the bidding for Naia 3. Tan was said to have told Cheng, after confronting him about his much higher bid, that he would never get to operate that airport. Is this going to happen now?

Justice Artemio Panganiban, in his concurring separate opinion, said that Asia's Emerging Dragons Corp., the firm that lost to Piatco, should not be allowed to bid and take over the project. But there are many ways to go around this, and many are now asking if Tan wouldn't be somewhere in the picture.

* * *

For former Solicitor General Frank Chavez, who defended Piatco together with Dindo de los Angeles, the last few days have drawn bitter-sweet results from the SC. He lost the Piatco case, but he got word that he won the PEA-Amari case. Chavez challenged before the SC as a taxpayer the amended joint venture approved by the Estrada administration between the Public Estates Authority and Amari of Thailand. Chavez argued that it is unconstitutional for public lands to be sold to private corporations, and the SC upheld him.

The problem, mused Chavez, is that he made money in the Piatco case while he didn't make a cent in the PEA-Amari case. "The law is the law and it has to be upheld," he told the media in connection with the PEA-Amari deal, but when asked whether this dictum applied to the Piatco ruling too, the flamboyant lawyer could only smile wanly.

* * *

Puerto Galera in Mindoro Oriental, which we visited during the recent long holidays, has been a favorite tourist destination for generations and it's easy to see why. Its myriad coves with brilliantly blue waters have provided sailors from pre-Spanish times refuge against harsh storms. Many Spanish galleons found shelter in its secure waters while plying the Manila-Acapulco route.

We drove up the mountains to the Ponderosa Golf & Country Club run by Tony and Evelyn Taylor, which offers the best view of the scenic coastline. A visit to Puerto Galera is not complete without that fabulous view from Ponderosa.

* * *

At Ponderosa we met a Frenchman connected with the energy sector, Hubert d'Aboville of Brittany, France, who has been living here for over 20 years with his Filipina wife, the former Ara Valenzuela. They invited us to their beautiful home further down the slope, the kind that employs indigenous materials and which one only sees in coffee-table books. What I found most fascinating was their account of how they brought over to Manila and Mindoro last February some 100 members of the huge d'Aboville clan from France, Brussels and even South America for the clan's grandest reunion ever. The junketeers from overseas had ages ranging from 8 to 88 (the latter was Hubert's mother), and it took the clan a whole year to organize this fantastic Philippine tourist adventure.

Hubert said his relatives savored every local color detail during their week-long stay in Manila, Villa Escudero and Puerto Galera. He recalled with a big laugh that while Mass was being said under a mango tree, which they reverently call "the cathedral" for its huge sprawl, at their place in Puerto Galera, his relatives couldn't concentrate because of the smell of five lechons being roasted nearby. The night before their departure for Paris, a concert was held exclusively for the 100 visitors in the church in Las Piñas where the bamboo organ is.

This has to be heaven, 'Hubert quoted his relatives as saying. It was French-Filipino hospitality at its best!

Ending an addiction

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

A FEW months ago, entering the US Embassy to take part in a press conference on the then looming war in Iraq, I chanced upon a demonstration participated in mostly by women.

What the demonstrators were protesting, however, was not the American invasion of Iraq, but the American withdrawal—of the supply of free contraceptives, which in the span of 30 years has accounted for 80 percent of the country's contraceptive supply. Since 1999, however, the Philippine government has embarked on the "Contraceptive Interdependence Initiative (CII)," meant to make the country self-sufficient and no longer dependent on a single foreign government for its supplies. The CII, apparently, was launched in response to the US Agency for International Development's resolve to gradually phase out the free contraceptives, convinced, as one USAID official once remarked to me, that the free supplies "were like a drug on which your government has become dependent," and while that "drug" continued to be available, the government was not going to be more resolute in pursuit of its family planning program.

That's certainly the case with the Macapagal administration, with the President blithely remarking that even if the US cuts off the supply of contraceptives tomorrow, her government was not going to allocate a single devalued centavo to buy contraceptives. Which makes the CII, if not an inutile program, then certainly a toothless one. Compound this with the President's all-out push for natural family planning and Health Secretary Manolet Dayrit's noises about the "abortifacient" effect of pills and the IUD, and what we have is not just the loss of free contraceptives, but the constriction of contraceptive choices.

Certainly, Filipino women (and men, too) have reason to take to the streets and protest the latest developments. But they should have camped out in front of Malacañang, not the US Embassy.

* * *

WHAT a foreign government does with its own money is its own business, short of invading another sovereign state. And the Philippines had ample warning that the free pills, condoms, IUDs and injectables, compliments of USAID, were going to stop coming soon.

But like a junkie, our government chose to ignore reality, and persisted in the illusion that the freebies would never stop coming. I think the Macapagal administration has even gone over the edge, dreaming that population growth can be curbed merely by imploring men and women to stop having sex at the wrong time.

Certainly, I don't think USAID or the US government should be made the villain of our self-inflicted tragedy. The free contraceptives may soon be cut off (the last delivery of free condoms was done last month), but in a recent "interaction" with the media, the agency says it remains committed to working with the Philippine government on meeting its goals.

Carina Stover, chief of the Office of Population, Health and Nutrition of USAID, assures that "the overall budget (for family planning support) remains the same and is alive and well." The amount used to import the contraceptive commodities is only being "redirected," and in a direction that our government had mapped out.

* * *

A PLAN in pursuit of "contraceptive self-reliance" employs these main strategies:

- Relieve the Philippine government of the burden of providing free services to all by focusing its scarce resources on the poor.
- Move a share of the responsibility for the provision of family planning services and commodities to the private sector (medical practitioners, NGOs and pharmaceutical companies).
- Provide more choices for family planning services.

Of the 3.23 million Filipino women of reproductive age (between the ages of 15 and 49) who use modern family planning methods, the majority (2.49 million or 77 percent) avail of family planning services in the public sector. That is, they rely on the free supply of contraceptives from government health centers. But a study shows that over 80 percent of those dependent on free contraceptives can actually afford to buy these for themselves: "People are willing to pay more than you think (for contraceptives)," notes Stover.

But first, Filipinos must be reoriented into thinking of good health as a valuable "commodity," a personal good that is as important, if not more, as other basic needs like food, shelter, clothing, education and entertainment, all of which they are willing to pay for. The class known as the "working poor" need to be convinced to turn to the private sector for their health needs, including family planning services and supplies.

* * *

AMONG THE ONGOING programs supported by USAID in the Philippines are the Well-Family Midwife Clinics, a network of 206 clinics owned and managed by midwives providing family planning and maternal and child health services; and FriendlyCare, which provides affordable and high-quality reproductive and family health care services to lower income families through 10 existing clinics.

USAID is also working closely with local governments through its "matching grants program" meant to strengthen the delivery of health services at the local level through performance-based grants to be matched by the LGU. The cooperation of local governments is crucial for the success of this strategy. In the wake of anticipated "stock outs," or the disappearance of family planning supplies, it is hoped that local officials will take the initiative to prepare for the shortfall by allocating local funds to buy the needed supplies.

It's time we quit our addiction to free contraceptives, cold turkey, if need be.

Bt corn a biological time bomb

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

TODAY, is the 17th day of the hunger strike that is meant to call attention to the grave danger of Bt corn and to urge the government to issue a moratorium on the commercialization of this dangerous genetically modified (GM) corn variety.

In 2000, a group of noted scientists from all over the world wrote a letter to all governments calling for the "immediate suspension of all environmental releases of genetically modified crops and products, both commercially and in open field trials, for at least five years; for patents on living processes, organisms, seeds, cell lines and genes to be revoked and banned; and for a comprehensive public inquiry into the future of agriculture and food security for all." You can find this at the website of the Institute of Science in Society (www.i-sis.org.uk) or ask for a copy from the Lingkod-Tao Kalikasan (ltkfi@codewan.com.ph).

Last April 22, Dr. Mae-Wan Ho, in his "capacity as scientist and designated expert of the International Cartagena Biosafety Protocol and director of the Institute of Science in Society representing more than 578 scientists around the world" wrote President Macapagal-Arroyo to urge her to reconsider approving multinational company Monsanto's Bt corn. He explained why.

Recently, 18 well-known Filipino scientists and physicians, led by Dr. Nelia Cortes-Maramba of the Pharmacology and Toxicology Department of the University of the Philippines' College of Medicine, have likewise come out with a position paper against the commercialization of Monsanto's GM corn. First on their warning list was the spread of antibiotic-resistant genes that would render life-saving antibiotics ineffective. But this is getting ahead of the story.

Even the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has called for a moratorium, saying that "in the absence of compelling human emergency" it sees "no justifiable reason to introduce in a hurry new untested technology until we have solid proof of their utility and safety."

What more does the President need? The warnings are raining down on us during this broiling-hot summer of our lives while everybody is worried about the unseen SARS virus that i sweeping across parts of the globe. The warnings on Bt corn seems all but ignored while the strikers in front of the Department of Agriculture go hungry to defend the environment and the food of the inhabitants of this planet.

The hunger strike is an attempt to stop the commercialization of Bt corn, a Monsanto-patented genetically engineered variety which has a built-in poison to kill the corn borer. Those who consider this variety dangerous have raised the following concerns:

- Because corn is wind-pollinated, Bt corn is sure to contaminate local poison-free varieties. Contamination is now a concern in places like the United States and Mexico where this was introduced. Bt corn could go the way of the golden snail that was introduced here some decades ago.
- Scientists have warned against the health effects of Bt corn. Four days after the Philippines approved the commercialization of Bt corn on Dec. 4, British histopathologist Dr. Stanley Ewen warned that Bt corn could raise the risk of stomach and colon cancers and hasten the growth of tumors.
- Filipino farmers whose fields are contaminated by Bt corn could find themselves sued by Monsanto which owns the patents. Monsanto has done this in the United States and Canada where farmers were fined.

Bt corn rejection is now gaining ground among consumers who do not want information about transgenic content of products hidden from consumers. Monsanto, its critics say, is strongly lobbying against GMO labeling of products.

But even poor countries like India and Zambia are going to reject offers of Bt corn as free food aid.

Among the organizations supporting the hunger strike are the Philippine Greens, Searice, Greenpeace, Pakisama and Lingkod Tao Kalikasan. Their members who are making the difficult sacrifice will continue until a moratorium on Bt corn is declared.

They contend that it is irrational for the government to rush to commercialize Bt corn and contaminate farms with a pesticide product that multiplies by itself. Bt corn is a biological time bomb waiting to explode.

According to Dr. Mae-Wan Ho, research in China showed that while Bt cotton is effective in controlling the primary pest of cotton when first planted, there were adverse impacts on parasitic natural enemies. Populations of secondary pests increased in Bt cotton fields after the target pest (bollworm) had been controlled, some of which then replaced bollworm as primary pests and damaged cotton growth.

Bt toxin, Ho said, is released in root oxidates from Bt corn. It accumulates and persists in soil and retains insecticidal, immunological and other biological activities with potentially large impacts on soil ecology and fertility.

Furthermore, the efficacy of Bt crops in pest control is compromised when pests become resistant to the Bt toxins. This has been a problem in the United States.

Bt toxins, Ho added, may be actual and potential allergens for human beings. And because Bt and Bacillus anthracis (anthrax species used in biological weapons) are closely related to each other and to a third bacterium, Bacillus cereus (a common soil bacterium and cause of food poisoning), they readily exchange plasmids. If B. anthracis picked up Bt genes from Bt crops, new strains of B. anthracis with unpredictable properties could arise.

That's more frightening than SARS.

"Please do not hesitate to contact me," was Dr. Mae-Wan Ho's closing sentence in his letter to the President.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Turning point

IT'S my first time and I'm intensely nervous. I'm lost. I don't know what to do or what should be done. I have yet to discover what is satisfactory or disappointing, what is acceptable or undesirable. Most of all, I'm terribly scared to make a mistake.

First times sure are tricky—to be a first-time mom, I mean.

YOUNG BLOOD

Amy Melissa R. Remo

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

Up until a week ago, when my sister and I saw the ad for Johnson & Johnson's saying, "Having a baby changes everything," and she told me it will be Mother's Day on May 11, I didn't I realize that this will be my first Mother's Day. The mere thought of celebrating my first Mother's Day with my baby was enough to keep me happy for the rest of the day, a wide dreamy smile pasted on my face.

Three months, can your imagine? I've survived three whole months of incessant diaper changing, sleepless nights of breast- and bottle-feeding accompanied by my baby's wailing that makes me panicky and feel helpless at times. Not to mention the constant visits to her doctor due to an allergy to cow's milk she has had since birth. Imagine my fear every time I see tiny red spots all over her face, the ceaseless coughing, vomiting and clogged nose—all of which I have often wished were mine if only to relieve her distress.

Mornings would find me bleary-eyed, droopy-faced, groggy and with eyebags to boot. Nights, on the other hand, would find me communing with the stars as I keep vigil to make sure she's safe and sound. During such nights, I wake up instantly to the slightest or the softest crying which tells me she's hungry. It doesn't matter if I'm feeling dizzy. I get up immediately to cradle her in my arms till she has contentedly sucked her hunger out.

But it's ok.,One look at my li'l angel dispels all emotions but delight and contentment.

So what if giving birth hurts? (Even if I had a supposedly "painless" birth, believe me there's a whole lot of pain to bear before and after.)

So what if I had to put my social life on hold? To quit cold turkey from all the vices and habits of my carefree college days? To turn my back from the old, happy-go-lucky me?.

So what if I had to cut back on my shopping sprees and gimmicks and save to build up a trust fund for my baby?

Perhaps it's cliché, but I just have to say it: It's all friggin' worth it.

I never really understood before what it meant to be a mother. There were many times when I argued with my mom over the most trivial matters and remained stubborn and defiant. I often thought my mom just couldn't understand me. After all, her times were different from mine and she couldn't have understood what bothered me, could she?

I found it most irritating to hear her pick on me endlessly, about the way I dressed, how I acted, where I went, who I was with, what I did. She wanted to know everything! I felt my privacy being invaded and violated, never mind if she was my mother.

After our worst arguments, I would bang the door and give her the cold shoulder. I didn't care how she felt. All I cared about was that I was mad that she just didn't get me. So I resorted to cover-ups and keeping secret all my affairs and gimmicks. My mom knew nothing of my "extra-curricular" activities. God, if she knew half of what I was doing, I swear she'd be in a coma. (Nah! I'm just exaggerating; I 'aint that bad really.)

I found myself drifting farther and farther away from her. Every time I tried to strike up a conversation, she just got mad and I couldn't understand why her blood seemed to boil (and mine as well) later on in our "conversation." It seemed as if we could not see the same picture. And I was convinced that all she wanted was to curtail my freedom and deprive me of my happiness.

Things have taken a different turn ever since I gave birth to my baby girl. Only now do I realize the sacrifices of a mother—physically, emotionally, mentally, psychologically. In many ways, to be a mother is to be a masochist: you have to bear the pains and hardships of motherhood and actually love it.

Now, like I said, I'm scared. What if my little girl did the same things I did? What if she shouted back at me and brushed me off as though I were dumb and devoid of emotions? What if we didn't get along? What if she hated me for the rest of my life? What if she came to believe I'm not a good enough mom for her?

Just thinking about it hurts. I honestly don't know how I'll take it when she starts reasoning out and answering back, especially when she reaches that difficult stage of adolescence when she'd rather be with her friends and search for her identity than be with me.

Imagine what my mom went through with me, my brother and my sister. Only now can I appreciate very well what my mom did for me, including the little things, like mending my shirts and loose buttons, cooking breakfast, cleaning up my room, waking up early to prepare my stuff for school. And to think, I never even gave half a thought to such things.

Now that I'm a mom myself, I can understand my mom's sentiments. It was not all drama when she would burst into tears of frustration over my willfulness. She dedicated decades of her life to taking care of us and making sure we turned out all right. And look how I treated her before.

She could've chosen to leave us with a *yaya*, and let us do what we wanted and go wherever we pleased while she got a job and fulfilled her lifelong ambition. She could have spent more time on chitchat with her friends or gone out to have coffee or tea or joined those charity clubs and spent all her time there.

But no, she stayed home for us, shelving her dreams of having a career of her own to watch me and my siblings grow up and become good, successful people.

I think this Mother's Day will mean more to me than any other Mother's Day in the past. It's my first time as a mother and, more importantly, I have started to understand what it means to be a mother. This is a turning point.

I know I've changed. My baby's just three months, and look at me: a person with a completely different outlook, different priorities and different concerns.

Am I more mature now? I guess so. But I know there's still a lot to be learned about motherhood—perhaps more than what I can grasp and understand in one lifetime. But I know I'll be okay. After all, I have the two best teachers I could ask for: experience and my mom.

There's a long road ahead of me. For sure, I will stumble along the way. Even so, I am confident that I will be able to raise my child into a good person. Thanks to my mom. She has had her fill of motherhood, and now it's my turn. I just wish I could be as good a mom to my daughter.

A young mom of 22, Amy Melissa R. Remo still can't believe she's blessed with a beautiful baby girl. She's currently working at Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Don't be scared, be prepared

CAN our leaders tell us how we can be prepared to cope with SARS in Metro Manila when only two hospitals are designated for SARS cases? One of them, the RITM has a 35-bed capacity. What happens if there are more cases? And where are the designated hospitals in the provinces? Are there ambulances exclusively for the use of SARS patients?

While isolation is imperative, patients also need respirators. Just how many of these are available?

How well do we protect our health workers so that they do not become ill or become carriers of the virus? In Singapore doctors wear respirator suits.

How can one expect patients to pay the reported cost of P20,000 a day for the treatment of SARS? What happens if they can't? Will treatment be refused?

Scientists have not discounted the possibility that the virus can be spread by insects, by the proximity of food stalls to live animals as well as through faulty sewer systems. When was the last time the sewer system in Metro Manila was upgraded? Father Reyes of the Archdiocese of Manila had a study on the need to improve our sewer system. Why has it remained in some filing cabinets?

On top of my list on good hygiene are the public toilets. From American fast-food chains to pit stops from here to Baguio, users are asked not to throw tissue paper into the toilet bowl. This results in the accumulation of germs and foul odor. Is this because of lack of water or overloaded septic tanks? How is this problem going to be addressed?

And how do we stop our people's bad habits, such as spitting everywhere and blowing the nose into the pavement or floor?

The Catholic Church and other ministries should adopt the measures taken by the Archdiocese of Toronto: no more communion by mouth, no drinking of wine from a shared chalice, no shaking of hands, no kissing of images. The new practices do not detract from loving God. In fact they are proof that we care for the health and well-being of our neighbor, which is our duty to God. Our leaders should show a good example by following these changes.

What kind of mask should we use? The masks that can really provide protection are expensive and almost impossible to get, except from stores that had been "raided" by the DTI. The N95 mask is manufactured by several companies. Its use is not for everyone. The blue-green mask is even more expensive. You may be better off without a mask than using the wrong one.

It is time to change our habits and our way of life. If we want to remain healthy we must make sure our neighbors live in decent homes. Habitat has a good slogan which goes like this: "Your home won't look good if your neighbor's house doesn't."

If we have weak lungs, we have weakened our immune system. Can't our leaders see all the pollution around us? Can't they see the garbage that remain uncollected?

—**LINA A. SANTIAGO,**
Mercury Street,
Bel-Air Village,
Makati City

Faith can keep one safe from SARS

THE PHILIPPINES is no longer a SARS-free country, as the Department of Health has confirmed. But I must express my deep admiration for the government's intensified campaign against the killer disease.

What made me write this was the recent news that even the archbishop of Manila is cautioning the Catholic faithful against kissing religious images and taking Holy Communion by the mouth. In my view, this act of Jaime Cardinal Sin is a measure of his faith and devotion to the Catholic Church.

The question should now be asked: Why would the cardinal caution Catholics against kissing religious images and taking Holy Communion by the mouth? If he has a strong, unsullied faith in God, then he should not have warned church-goers to worry because their faith will protect them from SARS.

In discouraging these old Catholic practices, the cardinal was saying that those religious images and priests were probable sources of SARS that taking precautionary measures inside the church deserved paramount consideration and were far superior to one's faith. To me, if one has faith in God, regardless of where he may be, his faith will protect him from any malignant disease be it SARS or any other killer disease.

What the cardinal should have advised the Catholic faith and the public in general is to go on with their religious practices, and strengthen their faith in God so that SARS may not affect them or ever become a hindrance to their pious activities and devotion to the Almighty.

This is my advice to the cardinal.

—**ABNER B. CABISUELAS,**
Commission on Elections,
Intramuros,
Manila

GMA's Labor Day 'gift' a deception

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's Labor Day "gift" was an attempt to deceive consumers and raise her sagging popularity among workers and consumers.

Consumers are not impressed with GMA's attempt to play up her image as the one responsible for the P28-billion refund of Meralco. She is taking credit for the refund ordered by the Supreme Court and not by her. Furthermore, the P28-billion is our money, not a gift from GMA.

Consumers see through the President's deceptive statements to lower the PPA. Her statement merely repeats her announcement in 2002. In May 2002, she announced the reduction of the PPA, resulting in a temporary decrease in July 2002. But since then, the PPA continued to increase, reaching P2.899/kWh in April 2003. This is nearly the original amount of P3.30/kWh in May 2002.

This time around we may not even feel the reduction because of the series of rate increases. The PPA will increase next month with the collection of Meralco's P0.0878/kWh deferred PPA, putting our PPA for May 2003 at P2.986/kWh.

The NPC's share of the PPA may further increase and even surpass the May 2002 level if the ERC approves NPC's petition for a P0.60/kWh increase.

Lowering the PPA is not enough for consumers. The Freedom from Debt Coalition reiterates its demand for the immediate abolition of the PPA.

—**LIDY NACPIL,**
secretary general, Freedom from Debt Coalition 34 Matiyaga St.,
Central District, Quezon City

Charged for using car cleared by TMG

I AM charged with violation of P. D. 1612 otherwise known as Anti-Fencing Law filed by the Traffic Management Group in Davao City for riding in a borrowed vehicle.

I do not question the right to file the complaint because in our justice system nobody is above the law. But what bothers me is the failure of the TMG to file charges against police officers who are responsible for the shipment of carnapped vehicles to Mindanao. Davao City is convenient destination of carnapped vehicles from big cities like Manila, and this cannot be done without the connivance of our law enforcers.

Like drug trafficking, carnapping is a lucrative business where millions of pesos change hands. And why it cannot be checked is not very difficult to surmise.

My case is very significant for those who abhor injustice and harassment by the police. The vehicle was sold to a businessman in Tagum City. The buyer used it for almost two years without the TMG lifting a finger to apprehend the buyer for possessing an allegedly stolen vehicle. The TMG even authorized the change of color from green to dirty white. It issued a certification that the vehicle was not on the list of carnapped vehicles. And yet suddenly became a hot car when the buyer lent it to me.

I respect the police organization, and this goes back to three decades ago when my brother was a professor at the Philippine Military Academy and my three cousins became the provincial commanders of the Philippine Constabulary. I appreciate their values and professionalism, their objectivity and fairness.

For helping fight drug trafficking and other forms of syndicated crime not only in Davao del Norte but also in Compostela Valley, Davao Oriental and Agusan del Sur, I was given recognition by the PNP Regional Command. I was also awarded twice as Judge of the Year for Region XI by the PNP.

By hitting me hard and below the belt, the TMG ignored my contribution to the police organization. The harassment was made apparent when it filed the case in Manila, instead of Davao City where the alleged crime took place.

How the TMG managed to get the Department of Justice involved in the case is anybody's guess. Senior State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño instructed State Prosecutor Esperanza Rozario to take a "second look" at my case to determine the issue of probable cause. Zuño already had misgivings about the case and felt that I should be entitled to a fair deal. But before Rozario could make an objective evaluation of my case, another prosecutor filed the information hastily.

What is very ridiculous is that the provincial prosecutors dismissed the case against the buyer of the vehicle while one prosecutor in the DOJ found probable cause against the person to whom the vehicle was lent.

I still believe in the integrity of the DOJ. Secretary Simeon Datumanong and Undersecretary Jose Calida who are from Mindanao will not be happy about my case.

—**JUDGE ERASTO D. SALCEDO,**
RTC Branch 31, Tagum City

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Blasphemy from Erap lawyer

THIS refers to your report last April 16, which quoted lawyer Prospero Crescini as comparing former President Joseph Estrada to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I simply could not believe what I read. Comparing Estrada to Jesus is utter blasphemy:

1. Although the Lord walked the earth as a man, He was without sin. Can we honestly say the same thing of Estrada?

2. The politicians and religious leaders of Christ's days were not just envious and afraid of His popularity, they were conscience-stricken and guilty of every pronouncement the Lord made. Is Estrada truly not guilty of the the crimes he is accused of committing?

3. The civil society movement of today cannot be likened to the civilian authorities "represented by Pontius Pilate." Pilate was not a civilian authority but a representative of the ruling Roman government that was employing military powers. Pilate had the authority to either free Jesus or crucify Him. Civil authorities during the time of Jesus did not have that power.

4. The anti-Estrada forces in the religious sector do not mirror the influential Jewish Sanhedrin since the charge against Estrada is not blasphemy but plunder. It is Crescini who should be accused of blasphemy by demeaning the Lord Jesus Christ.

Crescini would do well to read Josh McDowell's "Evidence That Demands A Verdict," John Warwick Montgomery's "The Law Above The Law," Simon Greenleaf's "Testimony of the Evangelists, Examined by the Rules of Evidence Administered in Courts of Justice," Frank Morrison's "Who Moved The Stone?" C. S. Lewis' "Mere Christianity," and Charles Colson's "The Loving God." I pray that Crescini will come to know who Jesus really is like some of these brilliant legal minds.

—**RUBEN MENDOZA,**
29 Dau St. 6th Avenue,
Grace Park,
Caloocan City 1400

Handwashing 101

AMID the fog of war around SARS, with all the confusing and often contradicting news and advice, you'll find SARS experts are unanimous about one of the most effective ways to fight SARS: handwashing with soap and water.

In this high-tech age, it's difficult to believe that something as simple as handwashing can be so effective against disease and death. Yet this procedure actually had to be "discovered," and it remains one of the most important milestones in the development of modern medicine.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

What led to handwashing as a medical practice? Western medicine developed around hospitals, where patients were put in close contact with each other. This meant diseases could actually spread faster in these institutions.

The spread of germs wasn't just among patients. As several physicians discovered, many of the infections were actually "iatrogenic," a fancy term which means "caused by the doctor."

The story of one of those physicians who "discovered" handwashing is particularly interesting. In 1847, a young doctor named Ignaz Semmelweis was teaching surgery and obstetrics in a Viennese hospital and observed that most of their surgery patients were dying. Moreover, in an obstetrics section handled by medical students, one out of every six mothers died after child delivery. The high maternal death rate was a source of embarrassment because in another section of the hospital, where deliveries were handled by midwifery students, the death rate was 2 percent. The medical ward became so notorious that women coming in to deliver their babies would kneel and beg to be handled by the midwifery students.

Semmelweis investigated, and realized that medical students and doctors were spreading infections around because they would move from patient to patient without washing their hands. Another deadly trail involved doctors moving from autopsies of cadavers in the hospital morgue to living patients, with the doctors doing nothing more than wiping their hands on their coats to remove dirt.

After Semmelweis introduced handwashing with chlorinated lime, the death rates for surgery patients and mothers dropped.

Around this time, physicians in other parts of the world—Oliver Wendell Holmes in the United States, Thomas Watson in London—also urged handwashing in hospitals but were ridiculed for their recommendations. It was only in the 1860s, after germs were proven to exist, that handwashing became a required procedure in hospitals.

Today we know that handwashing can also save lives outside of hospitals. It's our hands that allow us to pick up germs, as we touch people infected with diarrheal diseases, colds, flu, SARS or a host of other sicknesses, or objects contaminated with the germs. We then bring our germ-infested hands to our mouth, nose or eyes, all portals of entry for the germs.

Handwashing is simple but for it to be effective against germs, there's both science and art involved. Let's look at what's entailed.

It's worth repeating a quote I used last week from the World Health Organization (WHO)'s Laboratory Biosafety Manual, which gives advice to people working in medical laboratories, places with high exposure to disease-causing germs: "In most situations, thorough washing of hands with ordinary soap and water is sufficient to decontaminate them...Hands should be thoroughly lathered with soap, using friction, for at least 10 seconds, rinsed in clean water and dried using a clean paper or cloth towel (if available, warm-air hand-dryers are also recommended)."

Running water washes off many of the germs but in addition, we will need soap, and ordinary ones will suffice against many types of germs. The SARS virus is especially vulnerable because it is surrounded by a lipid or fatty envelope which soap breaks down, thus killing the virus.

The advice for thorough lathering and the use of friction—also known as plain old scrubbing—is to bring up the dirt and debris, together with the germs, before you wash them out. Note the 10-second advice is a minimum—you could go longer but don't get too obsessed here. (I'm imagining Lady Macbeth's handwringing.)

The WHO manual suggests using a warm-air hand-dryer because then you don't come in contact with other new sources of germs after you've washed your hands. Cloth hand towels shared by different guests and visitors can actually be dangerous, helping the germs to move from one person to another. It's safer to use paper towels. If you feel this violates your environmental conservationist instincts, then bring your own clean towel or handkerchief. If you're throwing a party at home, have a roll of paper towel or a stack of face towels, one for each guest. The towels can be boiled and reused afterwards.

I've also seen public health advisories reminding people not to touch any part of the sink or the faucet handle after you've washed your hands. The sink's easy to avoid but what about the faucet? You have three alternatives here. First there are those high-tech sensor faucets which automatically turn on and off in response to the hands' movements but these are expensive. A second alternative is to use a paper towel to turn the faucet on and off. The last alternative, which you can perform with flair, is to imitate health professionals by using your elbows to manipulate the tap. (Okay, I can hear you asking now, what if your elbows end up contaminated? Really now, do you ever bring your elbows to your mouth, nose or eyes?)

Some health education materials also recommend liquid soap over soap bars because the latter end up being handled by more people. Liquid soap stays inside the container until it's squirted out.

Proper handwashing isn't all that complicated, but it does entail some practice. Start with the kids so the 10-second scrubbing and lathering becomes an enjoyable game, and then a habit. Getting older people to learn proper handwashing may be more difficult, with all kinds of excuses: no soap, no water, no time. We have to keep reminding ourselves this 10-second routine is one of the most cost-effective prevention measures against disease, maybe even death.

Number one enemy of Filipinos

COLUMNIST CONRADO de Quiros hit the nail on the head when he wrote "The war in our midst" last May 1 and 2.

I agree with him that "we are the enemy we must fight. We are the enemy we must vanquish."

Our No. 1 enemy consists of legislators who want to amend the Constitution, despite surveys showing that majority of people don't want it. Instead of amending the Constitution, legislators should change themselves for the better first.

It is true that "We don't have a sense of country" and "*malasakit*." This is clearly manifested by the fact that businessmen don't pay the right taxes. And evidence of injustice, greed, corruption and poor government service is clear. For example, if a genuine public servant like Bayani Fernando is doing the right thing, many people don't want him to execute the law.

As long as we have *trapos*, our country and people will continue to go down and down. And so, many overseas Filipinos like me were shocked when President Macapagal replaced Fernando as public works secretary. Is she also becoming a *trapo*? Or is she already one?

After Fernando was replaced, do we need more proof that President Macapagal is going to break her promise not to run in the 2004 elections? And she wants to amend the Charter now, when, initially she was opposed to it.

—**OSCAR R. LANDICHO, Sydney,**
Australia or
Orlandicho@hotmail.com

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

US names new civil administrator for Iraq

BAGHDAD—US President George W. Bush has named a career diplomat and counterterrorism expert to be the top civilian official in Iraq, shaking up the effort to rebuild and democratize the war-battered country.

L. Paul Bremer, known as Jerry, will oversee both Jay Garner, the retired general running day-to-day rebuilding in Iraq, as well as Zalmay Khalilzad, the White House envoy working with political groups to form a new government.

"He's a man with enormous experience. He's a person who knows how to get things done. He's a can-do type person," Bush said Tuesday in a hastily arranged public appearance with Bremer in the Oval Office.

"The ambassador goes with the full blessings of this administration and the full confidence of all of us in this administration that he can get the job done," Bush said.

US Army General Tommy Franks will retain control over the US-led coalition's military forces in Iraq.

Bremer, 61, will report directly to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, through whom he will advise Bush "on policies designed to achieve American and coalition goals in Iraq," a senior administration official said in Washington.

Bremer served 23 years in the State Department, most notably as ambassador-at-large for counterterrorism from 1986 to 1989 and later joined a consulting firm headed by former secretary of state Henry Kissinger.

But his foreign service career, which has included stints in Malawi, Norway and the Netherlands, has taken him no closer to the Middle East than Afghanistan.

Garner said this week that Bremer would take over the political process as the US leads efforts to establish an interim Iraqi government in the next few weeks.

Five groups which led opposition to Saddam Hussein formed a political committee under US auspices in February, at a meeting in Kurdish-held northern Iraq before the war was launched March 20 to topple Saddam's regime.

The five met in Baghdad on Tuesday and will hold further talks with US officials here on Thursday. They are working out who will attend a national congress in the weeks to come that will select the government.

"Our efforts now are aimed at solving the problems of the people and forming an interim government," Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, deputy leader of a main Shiite Muslim group, the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. *AFP*

Saddam urges rebellion in reported new message

SYDNEY—Deposed Iraqi president Saddam Hussein reportedly issued a recorded appeal this week urging Iraqis to remain loyal and join the battle against US forces occupying the country, an Australian newspaper said Wednesday.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported that two men gave an audiotape of the appeal allegedly made by Saddam to its staff in Baghdad after being unable to deliver the recording to Arab correspondents in the city.

In the 15-minute recording, purportedly made on Monday, a "tired-sounding" voice calls on Iraq's people to unite in an underground war against the US-led occupying forces, the newspaper said.

"We have to go back to the secret style of struggle that we began our life with... your main task is to kick the enemy out from our country," the voice is quoted as saying.

"Through this secret means, I am talking to you from inside Great Iraq and I say to you, the main task for you, Arab and Kurd, Shia and Sunni, Muslim and Christian and the whole Iraqi people of all religions, your main task is to kick the enemy out from our country," it said.

The speaker made several references to the occupation of the country since Saddam's regime was ousted a month ago and accused US forces of looting antiquities from the Iraqi National Museum.

The Sydney Morning Herald said it had played the tape to 13 Iraqis, including a former acquaintance of Saddam and people from his home region of Tikrit, and "the overwhelming opinion was that the voice and rhetoric were very similar, or identical, to those of Saddam." "Certainly it's him," a judge from a Baghdad criminal court, who asked not to be named, told the newspaper. *AFP*

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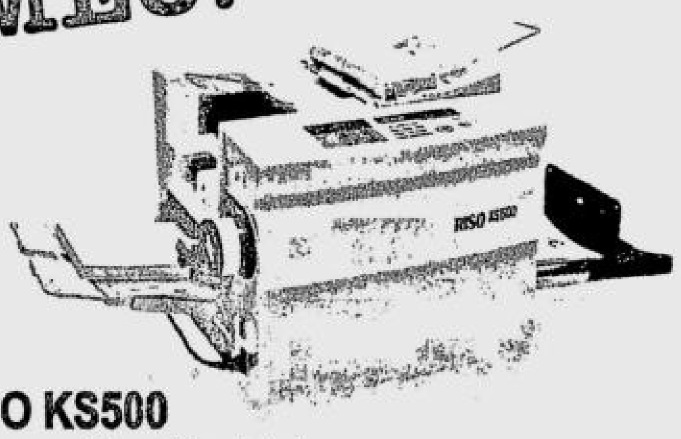

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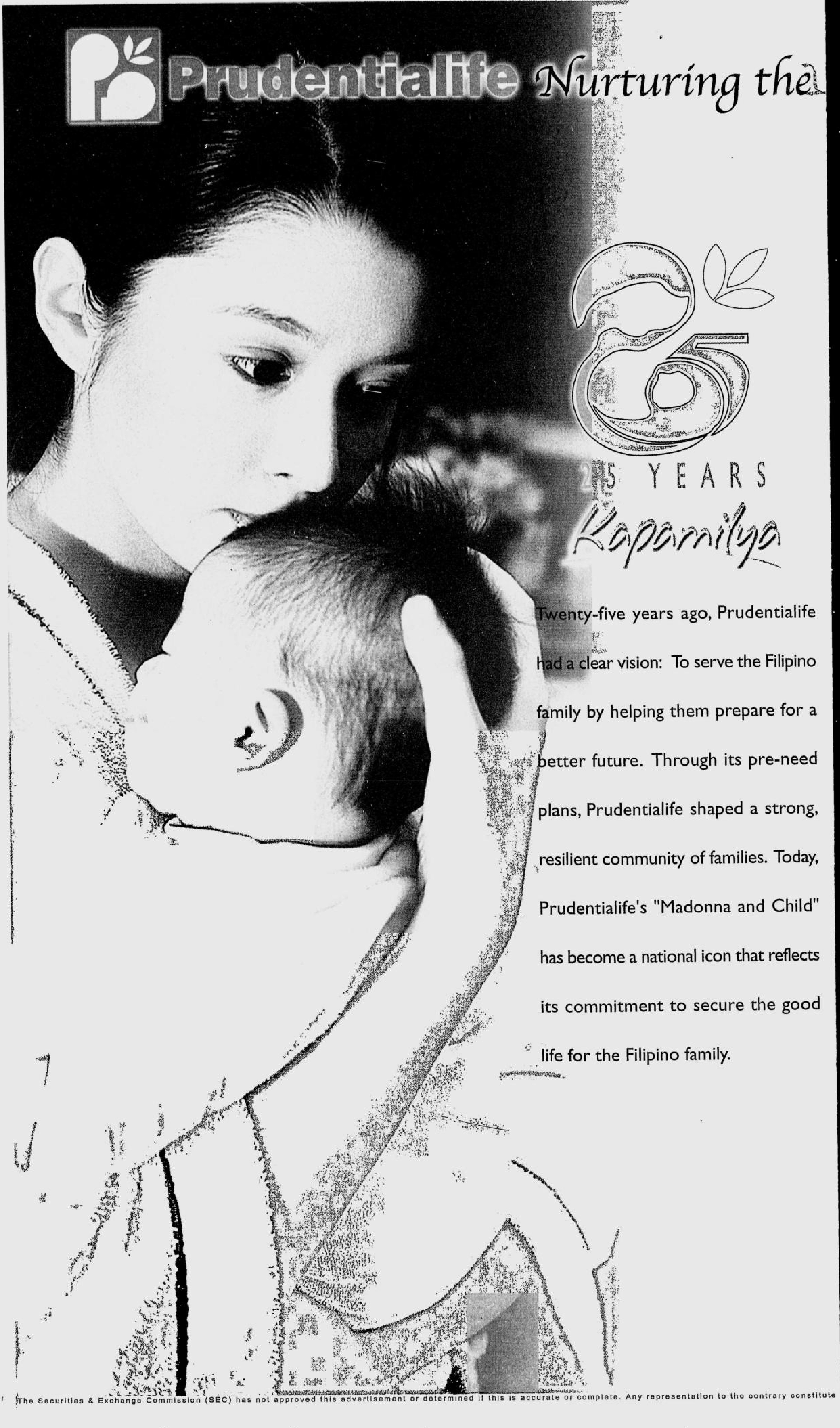

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Kapamilya Spirit

I extend my warmest congratulations to Prudentialife as you celebrate your Silver Foundation anniversary on May 8, 2003. The past year was indeed very challenging. The whole world grieved for the loss of many lives. In events like this, we are reminded that we have no control over the future. This is why the pre-need industry has grown remarkably. It makes the future less fearful.

As you celebrate your achievements, let us thank the Lord of your service of giving Filipinos peace of mind in the face of uncertainties. This is the priceless gift that Prudentialife and the entire industry offer our people. I pray that the almighty grant you success and well-being as you pursue your service on behalf of our brethren.

+J. Card. Sin
Jaime Cardinal L. Sin, DD
Archbishop of Manila

Prudentialife has nurtured a culture of kinship among all members of the organization much like the logo of the Madonna and Child that the company carries. It owes its strength to the Kapamilya Spirit as exemplified by our employees, sales force, planholders and the general public. We thank them for their support and trust in the company and pray for God's continued blessings as we pursue our commitment to build the good life for every Filipino family.

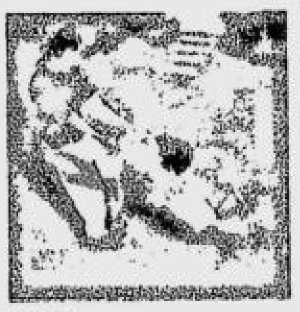
Jose Alberto T. Alba
Prudentialife President

A Culture of Kinship

On May 8, 1978, Prudentialife started as a pre-need company led by its founder Francisco A. Alba, now the country's Ambassador to the Holy See. Nourished by a culture of closeness, caring and Christ-centeredness, it steadily grew from offering life, pension and education plans, expanding into financial services, memorialization, real estate, travel and leisure and information technology.

1978: The founding Board of Directors

2002: Pope John Paul II welcomes H.E. Francisco A. Alba



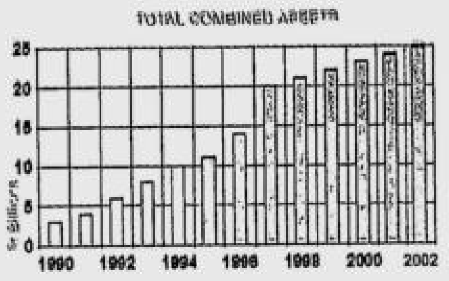
Life Plan

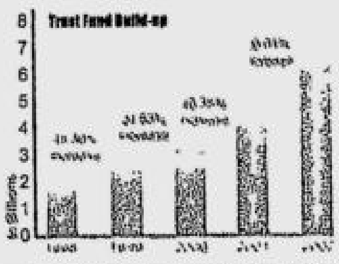
Pension Plan

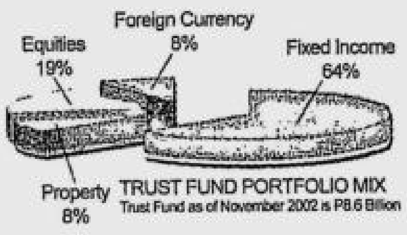
Education Plan

Growth and Leadership

The leader in the pre-need industry, Prudentialife has over P25 billion in assets, 30,000 sales associates, 1,000 personnel and a network of 250 branches nationwide. Valued at over P8 Billion, Prudentialife's trust fund is one of the highest and best managed in the industry. To meet the needs of planholders and customers, the company created 20 affiliate companies, transforming it from a life plan marketing firm into the integrated pre-need and financial services group that it is today.







TRUST FUND PORTFOLIO MIX
Trust Fund as of November 2002 is P8.6 Billion

Kapamilya ka!

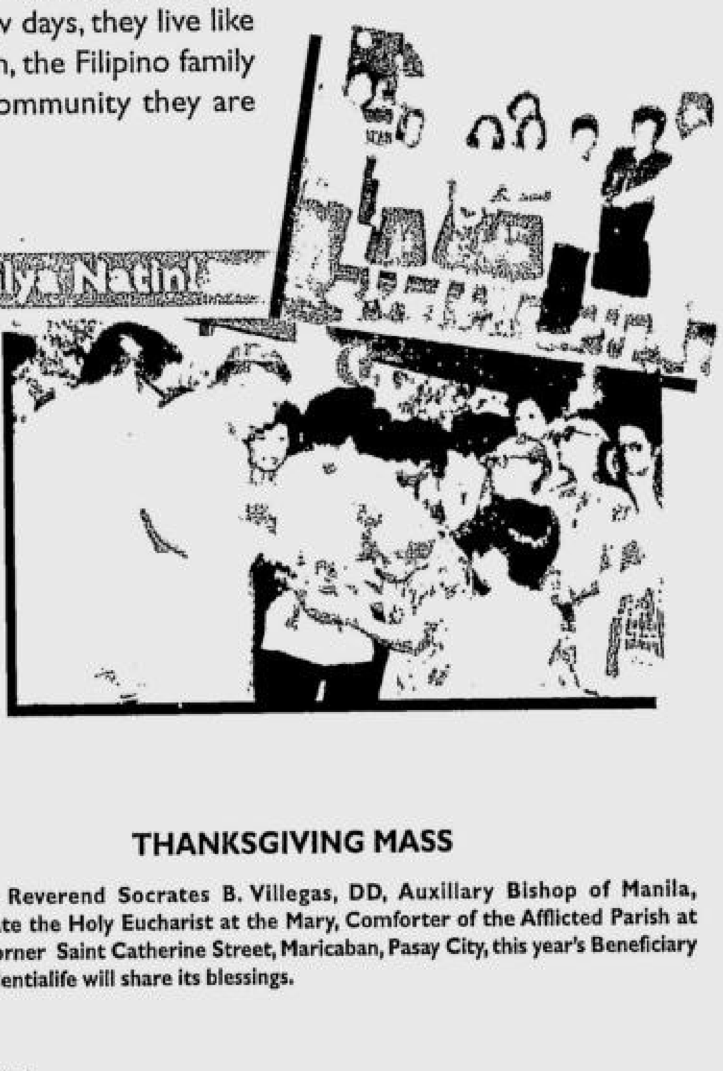
Every Prudentialifer is a Natural Nurturer, Tagapangalaga and Tagakalinga, keeping the Kapamilya Spirit alive and well in its annual company outings, seminars, parties, sports activities and other family-oriented programs. This "culture of closeness" unifies the company, making it a one big, happy family.

Kapamilya mo!

The driving force behind the company's growth is its sales people, recognized and rewarded in the annual PRUDENTIALAKBAY festivities. For a few days, they live like kings as reward for working like horses the entire year. For them, the Filipino family is not only considered a "market;" it is also a vital part of a community they are committed to serve.

Kapamilya Natin!

Prudentialife's sincere commitment to enrich the lives of the Filipino family emanates from a caring corporate culture that puts a premium in sharing its blessings with the less privileged sectors of society. It does its share through programs on education, livelihood, health, value-enhancement and contributions to charitable institutions and religious communities.



PRUDENTIALIFE 25TH FOUNDATION WEEK MAY 5-10, 2003

May 5 (Monday)	May 6 (Tuesday)	May 7 (Wednesday)	May 8 (Thursday)	May 9 (Friday)	May 10 (Saturday)
• Signing of MOA Gawad Paaral, Gawad Magsasaka (San Isidro de Labrador Scholarship Grant)	• 1st Silver Tee Charity Open Golf Tournament	• Product Launch of Prudentialife Silver Fund Saver	• Time Capsule: Prudentialife's Visions for the next 25 years blessing and enshrinement	• KAPAMILYA outing of Prudentialife employees and families (Enchanted Kingdom)	
• KAPAMILYA Kans - "25 for 25" (Fund raising for Prudentialife Foundation beneficiaries)	• KAPAMILYA Kans - announcement of 1st collection	• Appreciation Dinner for Company Loyalty Awardees and Scholars	• Nationwide Rosary for Peace - Mysteries of Light		• KAPAMILYA Karavan Visit beneficiaries/ outreach groups
• Kapamilya Text facilities for Customer Service launch		• Easy Pay-Easy Win Grand Draw Announcement	• Simultaneous Thanksgiving Masses nationwide		

THANKSGIVING MASS

H.E. Most Reverend Socrates B. Villegas, DD, Auxiliary Bishop of Manila, will celebrate the Holy Eucharist at the Mary, Comforter of the Afflicted Parish at St. Peter corner Saint Catherine Street, Maricaban, Pasay City, this year's Beneficiary where Prudentialife will share its blessings.

Watch
Maalaala Mo Kaya

Mother's Day TV Special of Maalaala Mo Kaya on Channel 2, Thursday, May 8, 2003 at 9:00 pm.

This episode is about the triumph of the Kapamilya Spirit. Presented by ABS-CBN in cooperation with Prudentialife.

Time Capsule Marker

Prudentialife's visions for the next 25 years will be blessed and enshrined in a time capsule at 12nn on May 8, 2003 at the Prudentialife Head Office; with a corporate commitment to unearth on its 50th Foundation Year 2028.

Prudentialife

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Pakistan pushes forward detente with India

ISLAMABAD—As top US envoy Richard Armitage headed to South Asia Wednesday, Pakistan pushed forward the diplomatic detente with India, hoping to resume full ambassadorial, transport and sporting ties with its arch-rival.

Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali late Tuesday proposed an exchange of ambassadors and announced resumption of air, bus and rail services, the release of all Indian fishermen, and resumption of sporting ties starting with cricket and hockey.

The moves were "in order to set the stage for a meaningful dialogue with India," Jamali told a hastily called press conference.

The announcements come amid a ground-breaking thaw on the subcontinent, triggered by Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's surprise announcement on April 18 to agree to Pakistan's longstanding call for talks.

However Pakistan's peace gestures, responding to India's May 1 pledge to resume diplomatic and airlinks, were considered "totally inadequate" by New Delhi, according to Indian press reports quoting unnamed officials.

They complained that there was no mention of "cross-border terrorism," India's phrase for the passage of anti-India Islamic rebels into its zone of Kashmir.

Armitage, the US administration's top troubleshooter, is due in Islamabad late Wednesday to spur on the detente between Pakistan and India, nuclear neighbors who have been locked in a dangerous impasse for 17 months and were close to war a year ago.

Accompanied by Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca, Armitage will hold talks with President Pervez Musharraf and Jamali on Thursday. He will meet Indian leaders in New Delhi on Saturday.

Jamali stressed his government's desire for dialogue.

"We believe that all outstanding issues between Pakistan and India must be addressed sincerely and constructively and in a composite manner through as sustained dialogue with a sense of priority," he said.

He also called for bilateral discussions on the two sides' nuclear capabilities.

"It is... important for both India and Pakistan to engage in serious discussions for nuclear and strategic stability in our region." Pakistan said this week it would get rid of its nuclear arsenal if India also de-nuclearized.

Jamali, who telephoned Vajpayee on April 28 to invite him for talks, said he "sensed a positive desire on (Vajpayee's) part to break the impasse in our relationship and take steps which would lead to improved relations."

Vajpayee has sent a "positive response" to Jamali's invitation, after receiving a formal letter from the Pakistani premier over the weekend.

Jamali stressed that any agenda for dialogue must include Kashmir, the Muslim majority Himalayan region straddling the two neighbours which has been a source of dispute for 55 years. *AFP*

UN watchdog concerned over nuke thefts in Iraq

VIENNA—The UN's nuclear watchdog agency is concerned that material suitable for use in "dirty" bombs that spread atomic radiation could be stolen from nuclear sites in Iraq, a spokesperson said Tuesday.

Melissa Fleming of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said there were "radioactive sources that could be used in dirty bombs" at at Al-Tuwaitha site south of Baghdad where there has been reported looting.

Terrorists could make such "dirty bombs" by attaching radioactive material to a conventional explosive such as dynamite to spread it over a wide area.

The IAEA wants its inspectors to return to Iraq to monitor nuclear sites but State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher said in Washington Monday that the United States has not decided whether to let the UN nuclear inspectors back in.

Fleming refused to elaborate on the nature of the "radioactive sources" but said they could be materials such as are used for medical tasks. She said the IAEA had no information whether such material had been looted or not.

Boucher also provided no information in his comments Monday about whether dangerous materials had been looted.

"Coalition forces have secured the facilities that housed the natural and low enriched uranium that was at those sites," Boucher said, referring further questions on security to the Pentagon.

He said none of the material at those sites "is usable in nuclear weapons."

Fleming said there was "tons of natural uranium" at the Al-Tuwaitha site but that this material, known as "yellowcake," was not suitable for dirty bombs.

She said the IAEA had removed or destroyed highly enriched uranium, fissile material that can be used in a nuclear bomb, from Iraq before its inspectors left in 1998.

She said the current concern was over so-called "radioactive sources" and that there were over 1,000 of them in Iraq, "including large numbers that were stored in Tuwaitha."

"The IAEA has provided an inventory list of the locations and numbers of these sources to the US," Fleming said.

Another IAEA spokesperson Mark Gwozdecky had said Monday that IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei had urged Washington in a letter April 30 "to allow the IAEA to send a mission to Al-Tuwaitha to investigate the disturbing reports of looting at the nuclear site."

"We don't consider it necessarily a problem of nuclear proliferation but it could be a problem of health and safety and environmental contamination," Gwozdecky said.

The IAEA had not yet received an answer from Washington, he said. *AFP*

US confirms Saddam family took $1B

AMERICAN Robert Rogers, first class sergeant of 725 Bomb Squad, prepares to explode tank shells left in Saddam's army warehouses outside of Mosul May 6.

REUTERS

WASHINGTON—Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and his family took about $1 billion from the Iraqi central bank shortly before the start of the US invasion, the State Department said on Tuesday.

Spokesperson Richard Boucher said US Treasury Department officials in Baghdad had reported the withdrawal to Washington and the United States was trying to hunt down the money.

"We do know from Treasury Department officials in Baghdad that approximately $1 billion was taken from the Iraqi central bank by Saddam and his family just prior to the start of combat," Boucher told reporters.

The New York Times first reported the massive cash withdrawal. It said Saddam's son Qusay and a close associate took $900 million in American bills and $100 million worth of euros in three tractor trailers.

Boucher said the United States did not know where the money had gone but he noted that US troops had found stacks of dollar bills in various locations in Iraq, including about $600 million in Saddam Hussein's palaces, and $100 million and 90 million euros (about $100 million) in an armored vehicle.

"We are working to hunt down the assets that were stolen by the regime of Saddam Hussein. We'll actively follow up on all the leads. All these assets are the property of the Iraqi people and should be returned to them," he said.

"We'll continue to encourage other governments to take appropriate measures if any of these assets show up anywhere, to track down and freeze the ill-gotten gains of Saddam Hussein and his family," he added.

The New York Times cited an Iraqi official for its report and said that Saddam himself had signed the withdrawal order.

Qusay, the deposed leader's second son, and one of the president's personal assistants, Abid al-Hamid Mahmood, carried a letter from Saddam authorizing the transaction, it said.

"When you get an order from Saddam Hussein, you do not discuss it," an unidentified Iraqi official who held a senior position in a bank told the Times.

The Times said Iraqi officials were uncertain what effect the disappearance of the cash—about one quarter of the central bank's hard currency reserves—would have on the Iraqi economy.

Some Americans suspect the money, reportedly stolen at 4 a.m. on March 18, went to Syria, the newspaper said.

Col. Ted Seel, a US Army special forces officer, said he was aware of the seizure of cash, the newspaper reported. He said there was intelligence information at the time that suggested tractor trailers were crossing into Syria from Iraq.

Saddam and his two sons have not been seen in public since the war began. The ousted Iraqi leader made a number of television appearances during the war, but it was not possible to verify when they were recorded. *Reuters*

Columbia crash due to broken seal on wing tiles, probe finds

WASHINGTON—The Columbia shuttle disaster was probably caused by a seal that broke between protective tiles on the left wing, according to preliminary results from the official inquiry announced Tuesday.

"We now know enough... to the point where we should now focus our effort," said retired admiral Hal Gehman, who heads the Columbia Accident Investigation Board.

Gehman, speaking at a press conference broadcast from the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, described the preliminary findings as "a working hypothesis" that was reached in the previous 10 days.

Columbia disintegrated on re-entering Earth's atmosphere on February 1, killing all seven astronauts on board, just 16 minutes prior to its scheduled touchdown in Florida.

The seal was likely damaged just 81 seconds after the Columbia blasted off on Jan. 16, when the shuttle's left wing was hit by a piece of insulating foam that that broke off from one of the shuttle's external fuel tanks.

Superheated gases seeped under entered the shuttle's heat-resistant external tiles upon re-entry and penetrated the spacecraft's cabin, resulting in disintegration.

Two days after the accident, as the Columbia and its seven astronauts were orbiting the earth, a North American Aerospace Defense system military radar detected a small object being detached from the shuttle.

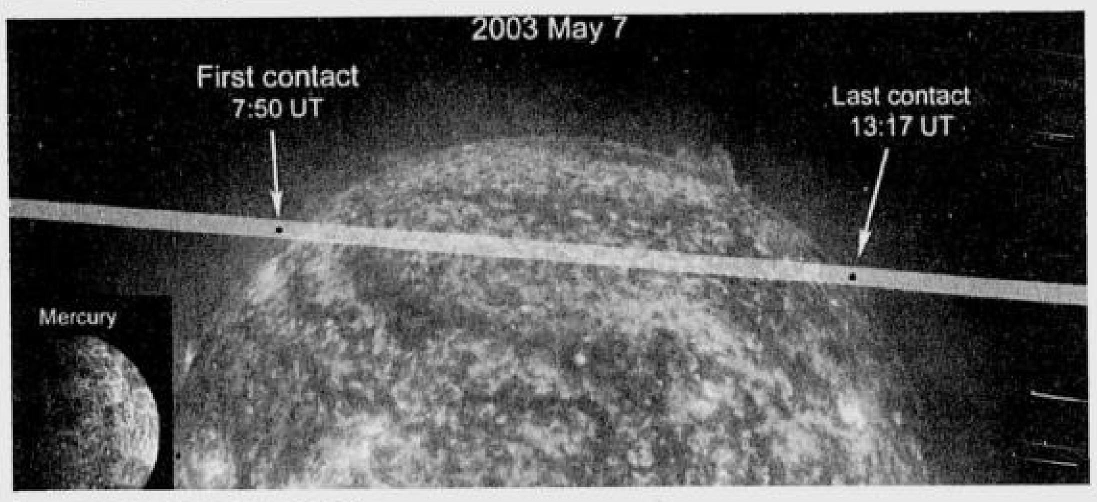
The object remained close to the shuttle until it returned into the earth's atmosphere, Gehman said.

Tests carried out to identify the object showed it corresponded to "a T-seal between the RCC (reinforced carbon-carbon) tiles on the left wing lead edge" used to bind together the heat-resistant reinforced carbon tiles that protect the leading edge of the wings from re-entry heat, Gehman said.

These tiles can withstand heat of up to 1,650 degrees Celsius, he said.

Gehman said that the damage led to the wing's internal structure being exposed to hot gases during re-entry.

"There was a breach and the heat got into the area for about 3 minutes and began to heat its way through the spar," or superstructure of the shuttle, Gehman said. *AFP*



RARE MERCURY TRANSIT

The planet Mercury will pass between Earth and the sun on May 7, in a rare astronomic event that occurs only a dozen times in a century. Observers in Asia, Africa and Europe will have the best view, but those in North America will only see the last 20 or 30 minutes of Mercury's five-hour-long trip across the sun, known to astronomers as a transit. Image shows the predicted path of Mercury across the solar disk during the 2003 transit, as seen from SOHO's vantage point.

REUTERS

Notorious West African warlord killed

MONROVIA—Sam Bockarie, a notorious West African warlord indicted for atrocities in Sierra Leone by a UN-backed court, was killed on Tuesday in a shootout with Liberian soldiers, the government said.

The former hairdresser, diamond-miner and disco dance champion had recently been leading fighters helping rebels in Ivory Coast—the latest war in a regional cycle of bloodletting that found Bockarie in his element.

Bockarie, 40, had been indicted by a special court for alleged crimes against humanity in his homeland of Sierra Leone, including mass murder, widespread rape and hacking off the limbs of civilians including even small children.

The court said last week that Bockarie, nicknamed "Maskita" for the way he could strike without being seen, was in Liberia and warned President Charles Taylor he could face trial himself if he did not hand over Bockarie and a former junta leader.

Liberian authorities said Bockarie was killed in a shootout after he crossed the border from Ivory Coast.

"He was trying to resist arrest," Information Minister Reginald Goodridge said.

A body said to be Bockarie's was put on display in Monrovia.

It was shot through the neck and had four other bullet wounds.

But in an apparent sign of doubt over the body's identity, the special court asked Liberia to turn it over for tests and identification.

Sierra Leone's ambassador said his country would have preferred Bockarie to have been captured alive.

"He has questions to answer to the special court," said Patrick Foyah, adding that Bockarie's death would still "be a big relief to a lot of people in this area." *Reuters*

Israel upbeat about peace as it marks 55th birthday

JERUSALEM—Israel celebrates its 55th birthday Wednesday with cautious optimism over the Middle East peace process despite continuing bloodshed.

Israeli army chief General Moshe Yaalon set the upbeat tone on Tuesday, saying the worst of the 31-month Palestinian intifada, or uprising, was over.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, speaking at a memorial to soldiers killed in wars since Israel was founded in 1948, also said there was a new chance to halt one of the country's most bitter conflicts, but stressed that hope resided more with the army than with the newly released US-backed "roadmap" for peace.

"The worst of the intifada is behind us," Yaalon said on public radio on the eve of the 55th birthday of the Jewish state.

In a further sign of detente after more than two and a half years of strife, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak sent a rare message of congratulations to his Israeli counterpart Moshe Katsav for the Jewish state's national day.

In an interview aired Tuesday, Sharon acknowledged that he had received many messages over Syria's offer to resume peace negotiations over the fate of the Golan Heights which have been frozen since 2000.

Sharon said he had "taken the oath to do everything in my power to lead the country to peace, and such a chance exists this spring.

"This hope is founded on the continued and uncompromising struggle of the security forces and Tsahal (army) to eradicate terrorism," he added.

In another hopeful sign, a poll showed that most Palestinians in the Gaza Strip favor an end to attacks on Israel in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied since the outbreak of the intifada.

A total of 60.6 percent of those surveyed favor that view, compared with 36.8 percent opposed, according to the poll by a Palestinian nongovernmental organization.

The United States has bolstered efforts to tackle the crisis since defeating the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein, pressuring Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to appoint a moderate premier and publishing a peace "roadmap" to wind down the conflict and create a Palestinian state.

US Middle East envoy William Burns has in recent days met both Sharon and the new Palestinian premier, Mahmud Abbas, urging the former to freeze Jewish settlement growth and the latter to follow up on vows to crack down on armed militants.

Jewish settlers in the occupied territories, whose communities continued to expand throughout the collapsed 1990s peace process, are the main focus of Palestinian anger.

But in a snag for US plans, Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz has decided to suspend the dismantling of around 10 rogue outposts in the West Bank. *AFP*

Democrat Bob Graham kicks off bid for US presidency

MIAMI LAKES, Fla.—Democratic Sen. Bob Graham formally launched his 2004 presidential campaign on Tuesday, criticizing the Bush administration's priorities and promising to "bring America back" to security and prosperity.

Standing on Main Street of the planned community built on the former site of his father's south Florida dairy farm, Graham said President George W. Bush had ignored homeland security to "settle old scores" with a war in Iraq and had crippled a once-thriving economy.

"In too many ways, the current administration has diminished our inheritance," Graham told a crowd of supporters and family, including his 10 grandchildren. "As president, I will bring America back—back to the values of our past and the promise of our future."

Graham, 66, a two-time governor of Florida and three-term senator who many consider the state's most popular politician, bashed the Bush administration's record on the economy, civil rights, the environment, health care and education.

"They have divided our nation between the few at the top whom they serve and the many who are left to fend for themselves with the moral equivalent of duct tape," he said.

Graham enters the race with clear strengths, including a centrist record as a popular governor and senator in the key state of Florida and his standing as one of only two Southerners in the nine-member Democratic field along with North Carolina Sen. John Edwards.

The last three Democratic presidents—Lyndon Johnson, Jimmy Carter, and Bill Clinton—were all from the South.

But he got a late start when his announcement was delayed two months by open-heart surgery, and he faces questions from Democratic activists about whether he can inspire support with his sometimes flat campaign style. *Reuters*

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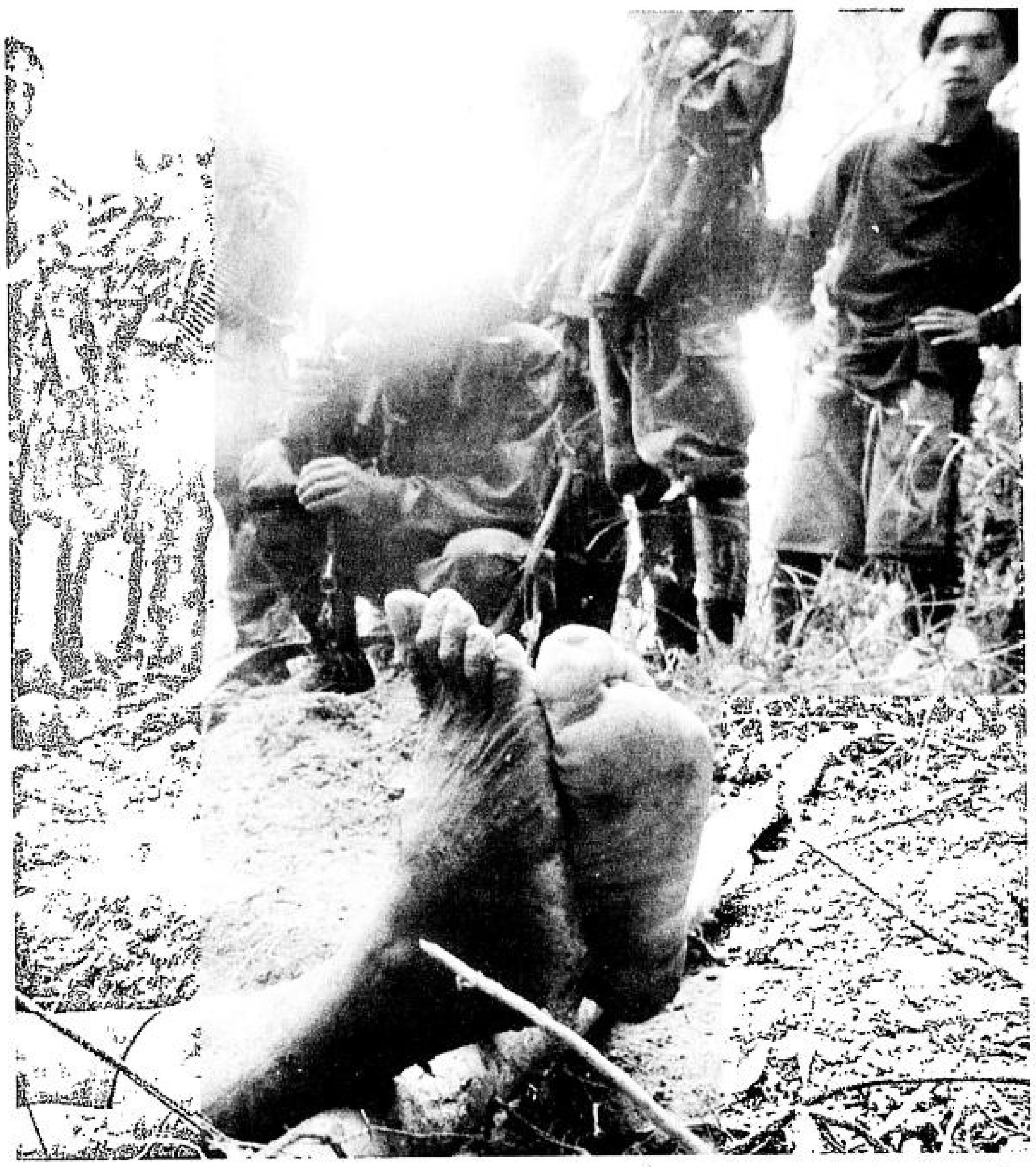
MILF rebs storm N. Cotabato village



A SLAIN MILF guerrilla lies in a shallow grave near Pikit. Government troopers and onlookers surround the body that was found after soldiers had gone after the guerrillas. AP

COTABATO CITY—Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels stormed a farming community in Kabacan, North Cotabato on Tuesday morning.

The military said three Muslim residents of Barangay Kayaga were killed in the assault, which was allegedly part of the MILF's continuing atrocities against civilians.

Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division based in Maguindanao, said the rebels, led by a certain Commander Tulay, killed Malik Mulok, 60; Malik Panalandan, 50; and Kugay Datu, 40, all members of the Moro National Liberation Front, which struck a peace agreement with the government in September 1996.

Three other people, including a 12-year-old girl, were wounded in the attack.

Three of the attackers were also killed in a subsequent clash with other armed villagers, who also belong to the MNLF.

But Ghazali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, said no MILF guerrilla was involved in the assault.

He said the violence was an apparent offshoot of a feud between the attackers and some of the villagers, who are mostly MNLF guerrillas who had laid down their firearms.

"Now, the military is again blaming us for every incident occurring in Mindanao without even waiting for an investigation to take place," he said.

Jaafar also said MILF rebels have no hand in the attack on a refugee camp in Pikit town and the burning of houses in Parang, Maguindanao on Monday.

Counter-offensive

But he admitted that the violence in Siocon and in Lanao del Norte were part of the MILF's counter-offensive against the military in retaliation for the military's assault on what the MILF said was its territories in Mindanao.

Many MNLF members had returned to the folds of the law after the signing of the peace agreement in 1996 during the term of then President Fidel Ramos.

But some MNLF members had turned to banditry while some were involved in the violence in Jolo that led to the filing of rebellion and other charges against MNLF leader Nur Misuari, who is now in jail.

In Davao Oriental, the military announced the capture of an MILF camp in Tarragona town after a heavy firefight on Monday.

Maj. Nixon Fortes, commander of the 8th Special Forces Battalion, said the camp, which is in Barangay Ompao, has six "big makeshift tents that could accommodate about 70 to 100 persons."

He said the rebels withdrew as soldiers advanced toward the camp.

Recovered from the abandoned rebel camp were three "links" of M-60 machine-gun ammunition, five combat packs with personal belongings and a sack of rice.

Evacuees

In Lanao del Norte, about 10,800 villagers from Maigo, Kolambugan and Munai towns, have sought refuge in various evacuation centers, as tension brought about by the aftermath of the MILF's April 24 attack heightened.

Regina Antequesa, of the Civil Society Organization-Forum for Peace in Iligan City, said the number of evacuees was expected to increase, as the military operation against the MILF continues.

Antequesa said children make up 40 percent of the total number of refugees in the camp while 30 percent of them are women.

"The children and the rest of the victims need medicine, food and clothing as these were their primary necessities," she told the INQUIRER.

The MILF offensives prompted President Macapagal-Arroyo to instruct one of her advisers to study the possibility of declaring the MILF a terrorist group. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Rosa-May V. de Guzman, Anthony S. Allada and Jeffrey P. Maningo and Joselle R. Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Course	Time	Days	Dates
Office 2000 Package(Win2000, MSWord, MSExcel, MSPowerPoint) P6,400/48hrs	1:30-4:30	M-Th	Jun02-Jun26
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun02-Jul08
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jun07-Jul12
Program Logic Formulation P1,700/24hrs	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jun02-Jun12
	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jun16-Jun26
	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jun30-Jul10
	1:30-4:30	M-Th	Jun02-Jun12
	1:30-4:30	M-Th	Jun16-Jun26
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun02-Jun12
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun16-Jun26
	9:00-5:00	Fri	Jun6-Jun20
	9:00-5:00	Fri	Jun27-Jul11
Enhanced Web Page Designing In HTML & Java Script P5,500/36hrs	1:30-4:30	TThF	Jun02-Jun27
	1:30-4:30	TThF	Jul07-Aug01
Dreamweaver MX P5,500/30hrs	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun02-Jun17
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jun07-Jun28
Macromedia Flash MX P4,000/24hrs	9:00-12:00	M-Fri	Jun02-Jun11
	5:30-8:30	M-Fri	Jun02-Jun11
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun23-Jul03
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jul05-Jul19
Macromedia Flash MX Action Script (Adv. Flash) P4,000/24hrs	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jun23-Jul03
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jun07-Jun21
Introduction to MS Transact SQL P3,000/30hrs	9:00-12:00	MTThF	May19-Jun03
	9:00-12:00	MWF	Jun09-Jun30
	1:30-4:30	MTThF	May19-Jun03
	1:30-4:30	MTThF	Jun14-Jul04
Visual Basic.Net Fundamentals P7,000/45hrs	1:30-4:30	M-Th	Jun02-Jun26
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun02-Jun26
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jun28-Aug02
Microsoft Access P3,500/30hrs	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun02-Jun17
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun23-Jul08
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jun14-Jul05
Structured Programming in C & C++ P3,000/36hrs	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jun02-Jun19
	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jun23-Jul10
	1:30-4:30	M-Th	Jun30-Jul17
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun30-Jul17
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jun14-Jul12
JAVA Programming Fundamentals (Module 1) P6,000/36hrs	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jul07-Jul24
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jul07-Jul24
	8:00-3:00	Sat	Jun28-Aug02
Developing Applications in JAVA (Module 2) P6,000/30hrs	1:30-4:30	MWF	Jul07-Jul28
	3:30-8:30	Sat	Jun28-Aug02
Network Technology P6,000/45hrs	9:00-12:00	M-Th	May12-Jun04
	1:30-4:30	M-Th	May12-Jun04
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	May12-Jun04
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jun14-Jul19
Administering Windows 2000 Networks P8,000/48hrs	9:00-12:00	M-Fri	May26-Jun18
	9:00-12:00	M-Fri	Jun23-Jul16
	1:30-4:30	M-Fri	May14-Jun06
	1:30-4:30	M-Fri	Jun14-Jul04
	5:30-8:30	M-Fri	May14-Jun06
	5:30-8:30	M-Fri	Jun14-Jul04
	9:00-4:00	Sat	May10-Jul05
Network Infrastructure P7,000/45hrs	9:00-4:00	M-Th	May24-Jul12
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	May19-Jun13
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun16-Jul10
Linux+ P5,000/45hrs	9:00-12:00	TWTh	May20-Jun09
	9:00-12:00	M-Th	Jun23-Jul16
	8:00-5:00	Sat	May10-Jun14
Linux+ (Blended Learning) P4,000/60hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	May19-Jun06
Linux 2 P5,000/35hrs	1:30-4:30	TWTh	May20-Jun12
	1:30-4:30	M-Th	Jun23-Jul14
	8:00-5:00	Sun	May11-Jun08
Intro to Oracle 9i P7,500/60hrs	8:30-12:30	TWTh	May27-Jun20

ELECTRONICS

Course	Time	Days	Dates
Basic Electronics P3,400/36hrs	1:00-5:00	M-Th	May26-Jun09
	1:00-5:00	M-Th	Jun16-Jun30
	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun10
	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jun16-Jul01
	8:00-5:00	Sat	May31-Jun28
Microcomputer Hardware Fundamentals P3,700/36hrs	1:00-5:00	M-Th	May26-Jun09
	1:00-5:00	M-Th	Jun16-Jun30
	5:30-9:00	M-Th	May26-Jun11
	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jun16-Jun31
	8:00-5:00	Fri	May30-Jun27
	8:00-5:00	Sat	May31-Jun29
Microcomputer Hardware Servicing P3,900/35hrs	8:30-12:00	M-Th	May26-Jun09
	8:30-12:00	M-Th	Jun16-Jun30
	1:30-5:00	M-Th	May26-Jun09
	1:30-5:00	M-Th	Jun16-Jun30
	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jun16-Jun31
	8:00-5:00	Fri	May30-Jun27
	8:00-5:00	Sat	May31-Jun28
Advanced Microcomputer Hardware Servicing P3,900/35hrs	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jun16-Jul02
	8:00-5:00	Fri	May30-Jun27
	8:00-5:00	Sat	May31-Jun28
Television and Monitor Servicing P3,400/36hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun10
	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jun16-Jul01
	8:00-5:00	Sat	May31-Jun28
Practical Cellular Phone Servicing P4,800/27hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jun11-Jun24
	8:00-12:00	Sat	Jun28-Jul19
Home Video Editing P3,300/16hrs	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jun02-Jun09
	8:30-12:00	Sat	Jun07-Jun28
Package Basic Electronics & Practical Cellular Phone Servicing	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun24
	8:00-12:00	Sat	May31-Jul19

AUTOMOTIVE/REF & AIRCON

Course	Time	Days	Dates
Basic Driving Course P5,000/15hrs	8:00-12:00	M-F	May26-Jun20
	1:00-5:00	M-F	May26-Jun20
	8:00-5:00	Sat	May24-Jul05
Auto Engine Electrical P3,000/42hrs	9:00-12:00	M-F	May26-Jun13
	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun13
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jul12-Aug09
Auto Body Electrical P3,600/48hrs	2:00-5:00	M-F	May26-Jun17
	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun17
Gas Engine Mechanic P4,200/60hrs	9:00-12:00	M-F	May26-Jun23
	2:00-5:00	M-F	May26-Jun23
	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun23
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jul12-Aug30
Diesel Engine Mechanic P4,200/60hrs	2:00-5:00	M-F	May26-Jun23
	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun23
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jul12-Aug30
Basic Car Maintenance P2,800/30hrs	2:00-5:00	M-F	May26-Jun05
	2:00-5:00	M-F	Jun09-Jun23
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Aug16-Sep06
Automatic Transmission Mechanic P4,200/60hrs	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jul12-Aug30
Electronic Fuel Injection Servicing P4,200/48hrs	9:00-12:00	M-F	May26-Jun17
	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun17
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jul05-Aug09
Underchassis Mechanic P3,900/60hrs	9:00-12:00	M-F	May26-Jun23
	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun23
Refrigeration & Aircon Servicing P4,500/60hrs	9:00-12:00	M-F	Jun09-Jun30
	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jun09-Jun30
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Aug02-Sep20

Course	Time	Days	Dates
Open Office P6,000/45hrs	5:30-8:30	TWTh	May20-Jun19
	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun23-Jul16
Open Office (Blended Learning) P4,000/60hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	May19-Jun06
Administering LINUX Internet Caching Servers (SQUID) P1,600/8hrs	8:00-5:00	Fri	May09
	8:00-5:00	Fri	May16
	8:00-5:00	Fri	May23
CISCO 1 (Fast Track) P3,000/30hrs	5:30-9:00	MW	Jun02-Jun30
CISCO 2 P6,000.00/70hrs	1:00-4:30	TTh	May19-Jun12
CISCO 3 P6,000.00/70hrs	6:30-9:00	TTh	Jun02-Aug07

ELECTRICAL

Course	Time	Days	Dates
Industrial Electrician P4,500/66hrs	8:30-12:00	M-Th	Jun09-Jul10
	1:30-5:00	M-Th	Jun09-Jul10
	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jun09-Jul10
	8:00-5:30	Sat	Jun07-Jul26
	8:00-5:30	Sun	Jun08-Jul27
Building Wiring Installation and Maintenance P4,500/60hrs	1:30-5:00	M-Th	Jun09-Jul09
	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jun09-Jul09
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jun21-Aug09
Advanced Industrial Motor Controls P4,500/60hrs	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun09-Jul10
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jun21-Aug09
Electrical Control Wiring Installation and Troubleshooting P4,500/48hrs	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun09-Jul07
	8:00-5:00	Sat	May24-Jun28
Motor & Transformer Rewinding P4,500/60hrs	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jun09-Jul10
	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jun21-Aug09
AutoCAD 2000i P4,800/72hrs	8:30-12:00	M-Th	Jun09-Jul15
	1:30-5:00	M-Th	Jun09-Jul15
	5:30-9:00	M-Th	Jun09-Jul15
	8:00-5:30	Sat	Jun07-Aug02
	8:00-5:00	Sun	Jun08-Aug03

INSTRUMENTATION

Course	Time	Days	Dates
Pneumatic Ind'l. Controls P4,200/42hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun13
Electro-Pneumatics P4,200/42hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jun16-Jul04
	8:00-4:00	Sat	May24-Jun28
Basic PLC P4,200/42hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun13
	8:00-4:00	Sat	May31-Jul05
Adv. Programming using Siemens PLC P5,400/42hrs	1:00-5:00	M-F	Jun02-Jun13
	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jun16-Jul04
	8:00-4:00	Sat	Jun07-Jul12
Calibration for Process Instrumentation P4,200/30hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jun13
	9:00-4:00	Sat	May31-Jul05
Industrial Process Controls P4,200/36hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jun16-Jul04
SCADA for Plant Operators P3,600/20hrs	1:00-5:00	M-F	May26-May30
SCADA Visualization using Wonderware Intouch P5,200/36hrs	1:00-5:00	M-F	Jun16-Jun27
Process Automation Course P7,500/72hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	May26-Jul04
Machine Automation Course P10,800/126hrs	5:30-9:00	M-F	May26-Jul04

APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES

Course	Time	Days	Dates
Enhancing Communication Skills P2,400/21hrs	8:00-5:00	Sat	May31-Jun14
Creating Preventive Maintenance Systems P2,400/21hrs	8:00-5:00	Sat	Jun14-Jun28
Creating and Evaluating Career Portfolio P2,400/21hrs	5:30-8:30	M-F	Jun02-Jun10
Mastering Feasibility Studies P2,400/21hrs	9:00-5:00	Fri	Jun20-Jul04

EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

Course	Time	Days	Dates
Creating Powerful Training Aid P3,600/24hrs	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun16-Jun26
Training Preparation & Animation P3,200/27hrs	5:30-8:30	M-Th	Jun30-Jul14

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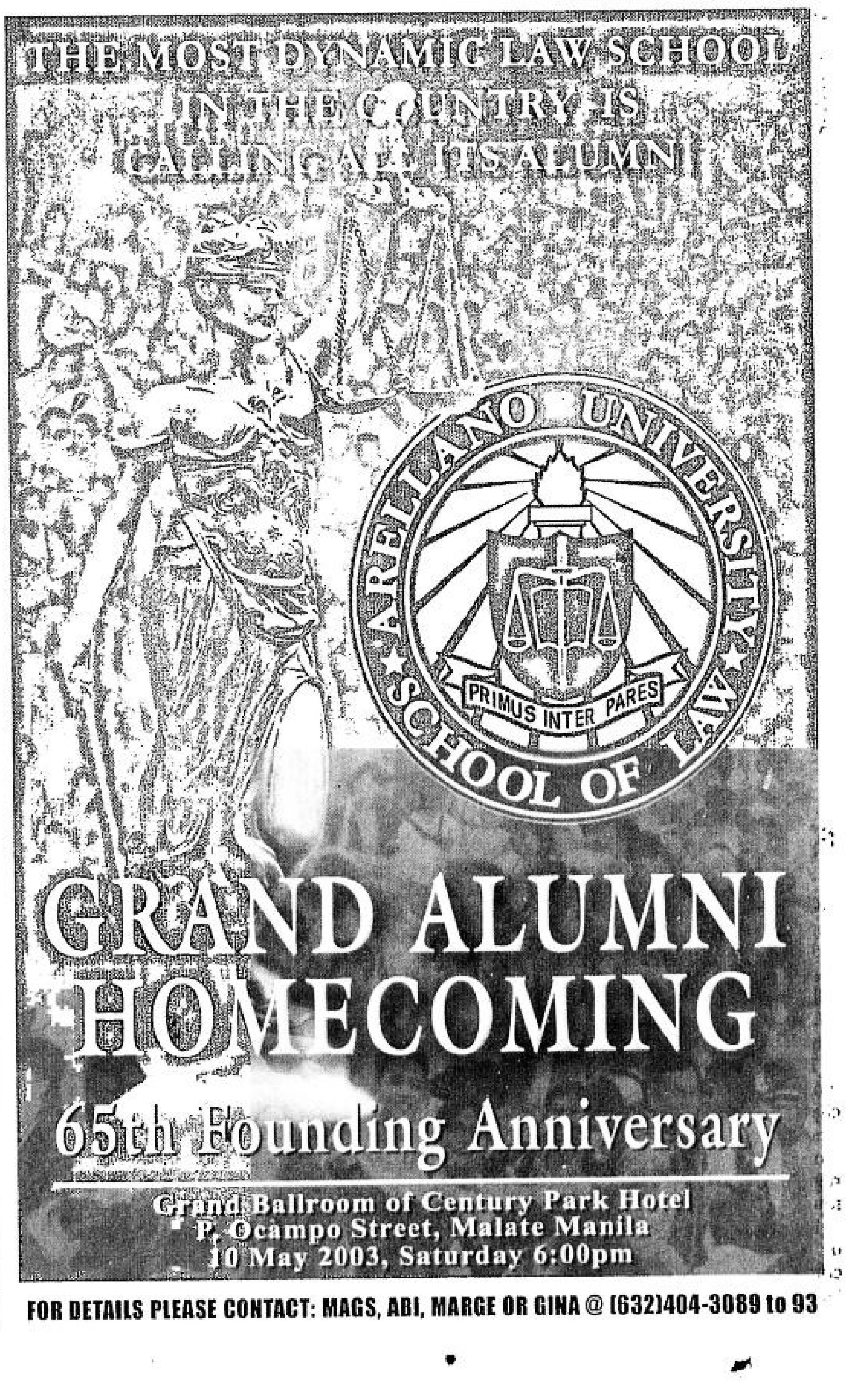

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ROUNDUP

3 killed in drug bust

DAVAO CITY—A policeman, a member of the Davao City Police Auxiliary Group (DCPAG) and a 67-year-old man were killed in a drug operation in Barangay 31-D here on Saturday. PO3 Romeo Laurel, a member of the Drug Enforcement Agency of the Davao City Police Office, and DCPAG member Eulogio Hanigo were serving an arrest warrant against drug suspect Ismael Botokan alias Pikpikan when the suspect resisted and ran away. Laurel and Hanigo then chased Botokan who allegedly jumped into the sea and swam away. While running, they were shot by unidentified persons from behind, killing them. A bystander, Sabduri Lupitan, 67, was killed when hit by stray bullets.

Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Drug pusher killed

DAVAO CITY—A suspected big-time drug pusher was killed after a gunfight with policemen, who were about to search his house on Artiaga Street here on Thursday. Senior Insp. Fulgencio Pavo, chief of the Heinous Crimes and Investigation Section of the Davao City Police Office, identified the fatality as Francis Sitjar. Pavo said they found a grenade and a .38-cal. pistol from the slain suspect. At least 23 sachets of suspected shabu worth about P287,500 were found inside his house.

Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Murder suspects arrested

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police in Sarangani on Tuesday arrested four suspects in the murder of a farm caretaker. The suspects, identified as Noli Ayong and brothers Robustiano, Dodoy and Luisito Rivera, were arrested for the death on April 27 of Ramon Torres, a caretaker of Banas Farm in Barangay Spring, Alabel town. Torres was hacked to death before his body was set afire. Robustiano told reporters here that it was a case of self-defense. He said they were on their way to work when the victim blocked their path and started hacking them. Robustiano even showed reporters a gaping wound in the left upper portion of his back to support his claim.

Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Voting by mail

LAOAG CITY—Voting by mail by Filipinos abroad will be adopted if the scheme turns out to be successful in three pilot areas where it was proposed to be conducted under the absentee voting law, Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda said here recently. She said voting by mail would be tested in Japan, the United Kingdom and Canada by 2004 and would be allowed in other areas in 2007 if the scheme went on smoothly. She, however, raised the need to safeguard the scheme, noting its vulnerability to fraud. Legarda admitted the difficulty of voting overseas where there are no existing Philippine embassies or consulates.

Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Murder try raps filed

CABANATUAN CITY—The Nueva Ecija police last week filed frustrated murder charges against the head of a vigilante group, a businessman and a barangay captain for the wounding of a policeman. Chief Insp. Rhoderick Armamento, chief of the provincial police's investigation and intelligence bureau, identified those charged before the provincial prosecutor's office as Ricardo Peralta, head of the Red Vigilante Group; businessman Roberto Martin; and Emerito Garcia, chair of Barangay Mambangnan in San Leonardo town. Armamento said Peralta led the gunfight with his team on April 23 in Barangay San Roque, San Leonardo town that led to the wounding of PO3 Rocco Matic.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Ex-cop killed

PADRE GARCIA, Batangas—A former police officer was killed in his home while trying to escape from police officers serving a warrant for his arrest in Barangay Poblacion in this town on Saturday. Manolito Lacerna, alleged leader of a crime group bearing his name and who was discharged in 1998 for his involvement in car theft and robbery, ran out of his house with his M-1 carbine, using the backdoor, when he saw the policemen. SPO4 Rodel Pesigan, team leader of the Padre Garcia police group, said Lacerna shot them, forcing them to retaliate. Lacerna was hit in the head and was rushed to the hospital but was pronounced dead on arrival.

Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

SARS in garbage

SILANG, Cavite—Because of Mayor Ruben Maglangsakay's failure to look for an alternative dumpsite, residents have expressed fears of getting inflicted with the SARS virus. Maglangsakay, however, claimed that Cavite is SARS free. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources had reportedly castigated Maglangsakay several times last year for burning the town's garbage during weekends, but until now his administration has no dumpsite.

Fausto Tatad Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Youth award

CALAPAN CITY—An ordinance establishing the Gintong Kabataan Awards in Oriental Mindoro was passed to honor Mindoreños 21 years old and below for their role in nation-building. It aims to further empower the youth and inculcate in them patriotism and nationalism. A medal, plaque and cash award (P25,000 for individual and P50,000 for a group of individuals and P50,000 for the organization) will be given to winners during the foundation anniversary of the province.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Rabies alert

SORSOGON CITY—The Provincial Veterinary Office expressed alarm over the increasing cases of rabies in Sorsogon and asked for emergency funds to help curb it. The Bureau of Animal Industry has recorded eight cases of rabies infection since January this year. The province had only eight cases for the whole year last year. Dr. Enrique Espiritu, provincial veterinarian, said they could not move effectively without funds since they lack manpower. "We have simultaneous vaccination, provincewide. We already have the vaccines but our main problem is manpower. We need to hire additional vaccinators," he said.

Emir Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

VAL HANDUMON

CLAYWARE

Clay pots take shape through the skills of a female potter in this clayware-making shop in Barangay Tabo in San Juan, La Union.

ADELA CATALON'S DAD

SARS victim's ashes brought home

ALCALA, Pangasinan—The ashes of Mauricio Catalon, who died of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), were brought to the family's home village of Barangay Vacante here on Wednesday dawn.

The ashes, according to relatives, will be buried only after Catalon's immediate family members had been discharged from the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) where they were confined for SARS infection.

Unlike the "final homecoming" of Catalon's daughter Adela, who also died of SARS, a wake will be held for Mauricio, a relative said.

Adela's body was brought to Vacante on April 17 but her sealed coffin was not taken out of the funeral car and was immediately buried upon instructions from the Department of Health. On May 2, the DOH declared Barangay Vacante as SARS-free 10 days after it was found that the disease had not been transmitted to other villagers.

President Macapagal-Arroyo visited the village without any protective clothing to signify the village's being SARS-free after the death of Adela.

Adela, a nursing aide in Canada who got the SARS virus in that country, infected her father with the virus.

Vacante villagers, who were recently put in isolation to monitor them for probable SARS infection, also went out of their houses to condole with the Catalon family.

Villagers avoided Adela's body when it was brought home last month. Only close relatives and friends joined Adela's funeral procession.

"Now, many came to condole with us," said Gene Catalon, Mauricio's daughter-in-law. Gene is the wife of the village chief and mother of Jennifer, who, together with Catalon's wife, are still confined at the RITM.

Dr. Nemesia Mejia, provincial health officer, said the quarantine period for the Catalons' relatives at the RITM was extended for another 10 days to ensure that they are also free of the virus when they return to the village.

Gene said Catalon's ashes were placed in a biscuit can because these won't fit in an urn. She said Catalon's coffin was burned together with the body.

Gene said they would put the sealed can inside a coffin for the wake. The family, she said, has started the nine-day novena, a traditional prayer for the dead, for Catalon.

"It is difficult to lose two loved ones one after the other. What makes it more painful was that we could not see their bodies before the burial," Gene said.

Gene said her daughter Jennifer has been sending text messages informing them that she, her grandmother and her father, are in good condition at the RITM.

"They will all go home together, and then we can bury our father," she said.

Ms Macapagal said she has ordered the setting aside of at least P1 billion to be spent for measures to prevent the spread of SARS and treat SARS patients. *Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

SARS scare sweeps Batangas sex trade

BATANGAS CITY—The SARS scare has reached the illicit sex trade in this city as residents expressed fears that commercial sex workers may come into contact with SARS carriers in their sorties in foreign vessels that dock in this city's port.

A male resident of Sta. Clara said his neighborhood expressed alarm that it could be infected with SARS from the sex workers who continue to have sexual contact with sailors from foreign ships that did not pass quarantine procedures.

Most of the sex workers at the pier area live in Sta. Clara's congested squatters' area and they could easily infect the entire populace with the dreaded killer pneumonia virus.

But according to Josephine Sebollena, manager of the resource management division of the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) in Batangas port, the foreign vessels that dock in the port undergo quarantine measures.

"When a foreign vessel arrives in the port, the harbor pilot is immediately informed of its arrival," Sebollena said.

"From there, the harbor pilot calls the quarantine officer to check on the vessel," she added.

The quarantine officer from the Department of Health's Bureau of Quarantine issues the quarantine certificate to the vessel and its crew if they pass the quarantine check.

But the PPA here does not have a medical quarantine office. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Families of OFWs appeal for fairness, care in dealing with returning workers

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Families of overseas Filipino workers are urging the public not to ostracize their loved ones especially those who have returned from countries affected by the dreaded Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

The relatives of the OFWs converged at the regional office of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, which celebrated its 25th anniversary on Tuesday.

"It is unfair for them (OFWs) to be treated this way, to be ostracized by their own community," said Marissa, 28, of this city. She declined to give her full name.

Marissa's sister-in-law has been working as a domestic helper in Hong Kong for about 10 years now.

"But I am afraid for her if she will return here in the country. She will also suffer the same fate of other OFWS who returned from Hong Kong but were practically driven away by their neighbors," she said.

Another woman said she had told her daughter who was working as a domestic helper in Hong Kong not to come home because she might just be ostracized by their neighbors.

"Nobody welcomes them anymore unlike before. They are being ignored, discriminated or even worse, threatened to be killed. This is too much," she said.

Mila Bacus, Department of Health director for Eastern Visayas, cited the case of an OFW from Villaba town, Leyte who was stopped by her neighbors from getting into her own home after she arrived from Hong Kong.

Bacus said the OFW was then taken by her relatives to the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center, the designated SARS center in Eastern Visayas.

The woman was immediately discharged after the doctors gave her a clean bill of health.

Valentina Alandra, 75, of Biliran town, Biliran, said a domestic helper from Hong Kong planned to come home to attend the town fiesta on May 16.

"Many residents in our barangay already asked her family (to tell her) not to come home," she said. "Her return might only cause panic and we don't want that to happen while we celebrate our fiesta."

Records at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA-8) showed that there are more than 1,200 OFWs from Eastern Visayas who are working in SARS-affected countries like Hong Kong, Taiwan and Canada.

Ma. Evangeline Filamor, Owwa chief for Eastern Visayas, stressed the need to educate the public about SARS.

"Our ignorance on SARS could lead us to more danger," she said.

Bacus, for her part, said there was a need to conduct an information campaign on the mode of transmission of the virus that causes SARS and how to avoid being infected.

"Ostracizing an OFW, whether he has SARS or not, will not bring any good. We'll just drive the problem underground if we keep on ostracizing them," she said.

OFW who died of appendicitis in HK coming home

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The overseas Filipino worker, who was wrongly reported to have died of the deadly Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), is coming home.

The remains of Josephine Caparos, 34, will arrive at about 9 p.m. on Thursday at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, 14 days after she died of appendicitis at a hospital in Hong Kong.

Her cousin Gregorio Oro and some officials of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration would receive her sealed metal casket, which would be brought in from Hong Kong via PAL Flight 311.

Rodolfo Caparos, 60, said his daughter's remains would arrive at the Daniel Z. Romualdez Airport here at about 7 a.m. on Friday through PAL 391.

He, along with some Owwa personnel, would bring her body to their residence in Barangay Cambalading, three kilometers from the town proper of Albuera, Leyte.

Rodolfo stressed that Josephine died of appendicitis and not from SARS as wrongly reported by TV news reports.

The newscasts were heard by more than 3,000 residents of Barangay Cambalading, who reportedly went into panic.

Rodolfo said his neighbors had asked him not to bring the remains of his daughter into their home out of fear that they too might get infected.

"I was very angry because I was already informed by her employers that appendicitis was the cause of death," said Rodolfo, a municipal employee of Albuera.

Their neighbors only calmed down after they explained the real cause of Josephine's death, he added.

Rodolfo said they will hold a wake for a week and then bury her remains at the public cemetery in Albuera town, about 120 km from this city.

Josephine had been working as a domestic helper in Hong Kong for five years. She had told her parents that she had no problem with her employers, an Indian couple who had been good to her.

On April 26, Rodolfo received a long distance call from Josephine's employer saying that his daughter died while being operated on for appendicitis in a hospital in Hong Kong.

"We were all shocked," he said. "My wife Rosita and I fainted after we were informed about her death."

It was difficult for the family to accept her death because she had always been a good daughter and sister to her five younger siblings.

Rodolfo said Josephine was spending for the education of her 13-year-old brother Jed, who would be first year high school in June.

"When he learned that his *ate* died, he (Jed) kept on crying. He placed the picture of his *ate* on his chest every time he slept," he said.

Rodolfo said his daughter never failed to send them money every month, which was used to repair their house and to buy a rice field (*palayan*).

The last time they saw her alive was in July last year. She had planned to visit her family again this July.

Cops called to prevent land reform bloodshed

BACOLOD CITY—The Negros Occidental police provincial office sent men to a disputed piece of property in Moises Padilla town following Saturday's scuffle between rival groups of agrarian reform beneficiaries that left a farmer killed and four others wounded.

Senior Supt. Vicente Ponteras, Negros Occidental police director, said he ordered seven members of the 3rd Police Mobile Group to patrol Hacienda San Benito to prevent more violence.

He said Army soldiers were also on call.

In his report to Ponteras, Insp. Regidor Alvarado, Moises Padilla police chief, said a farmer was killed on Saturday when a rival group of agrarian reform beneficiaries tried to take over a portion of the property in Barangay Crossing, Moises Padilla town, about 50 kilometers from this city.

He said the fatality, Alberto Espartero, reportedly belonged to a group of farmer-beneficiaries organized by the management of Hacienda San Benito.

Four were wounded in the scuffle. They were identified as Jimmy Castillo and Erlito, Jimmy and Jupiter, all surnamed Battalon.

Alvarado said the group of Battalon headed by Redelma Dichosa forcibly took over the disputed property and cut the newly planted sugarcane.

This later led to the confrontation between the Battalion group and the farmer-beneficiaries identified with management.

A statement from the Task Force Mapalad (TFM) said Espartero belonged to the group that tried to take over the property and not to the farmer-beneficiaries who were loyal to management.

The TFM said Espartero, 40, was one of the 181 farmers who were awarded with Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) in 1999 for the 316-hectare Hacienda San Benito.

The militant peasant group said Espartero and about 50 other CLOA holders tried to claim about nine hectares of the hacienda, which they alleged had been awarded to them in 1999.

Tension, however, ensued when personnel of the former landowner led by administrator Lito Vinzon tried to stop Espartero's group.

According to the TFM, witnesses said Espartero tried to negotiate with Vinzon's group. Vinzon and other farmers loyal to the management subsequently drove away the CLOA holders from the land.

Gunshots were heard as Espartero and other CLOA holders stood their ground, the TFM claimed. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

3 ex-NPAs slain in clash with Army

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Three suspected rebels from the Rebolusyonaryong Gerilyang Arayat (RGA) were killed while another rebel was captured in a clash with government troopers on Wednesday in the eastern border of Pampanga and Bulacan, an Army report said.

However, soldiers from the Army's 69th and 56th infantry battalions failed to recover the bodies of the slain rebels in the 3 a.m. gunfight in San Rafael, Bulacan, according to Maj. Gen. Alberto Braganza, chief of the 7th Infantry Division based in Fort Magsaysay.

Braganza said the Army's informants confirmed the number of fatalities in the encounter in the boundary of Barangays Pulong Bayabas and San Roque in San Rafael.

Braganza identified the captured rebel as Julio Corteno, 42, alias Ka July.

Braganza said about 10 RGA rebels were meeting in Corteno's house when government troops arrived. Soldiers reported seizing two high-powered firearms from the site.

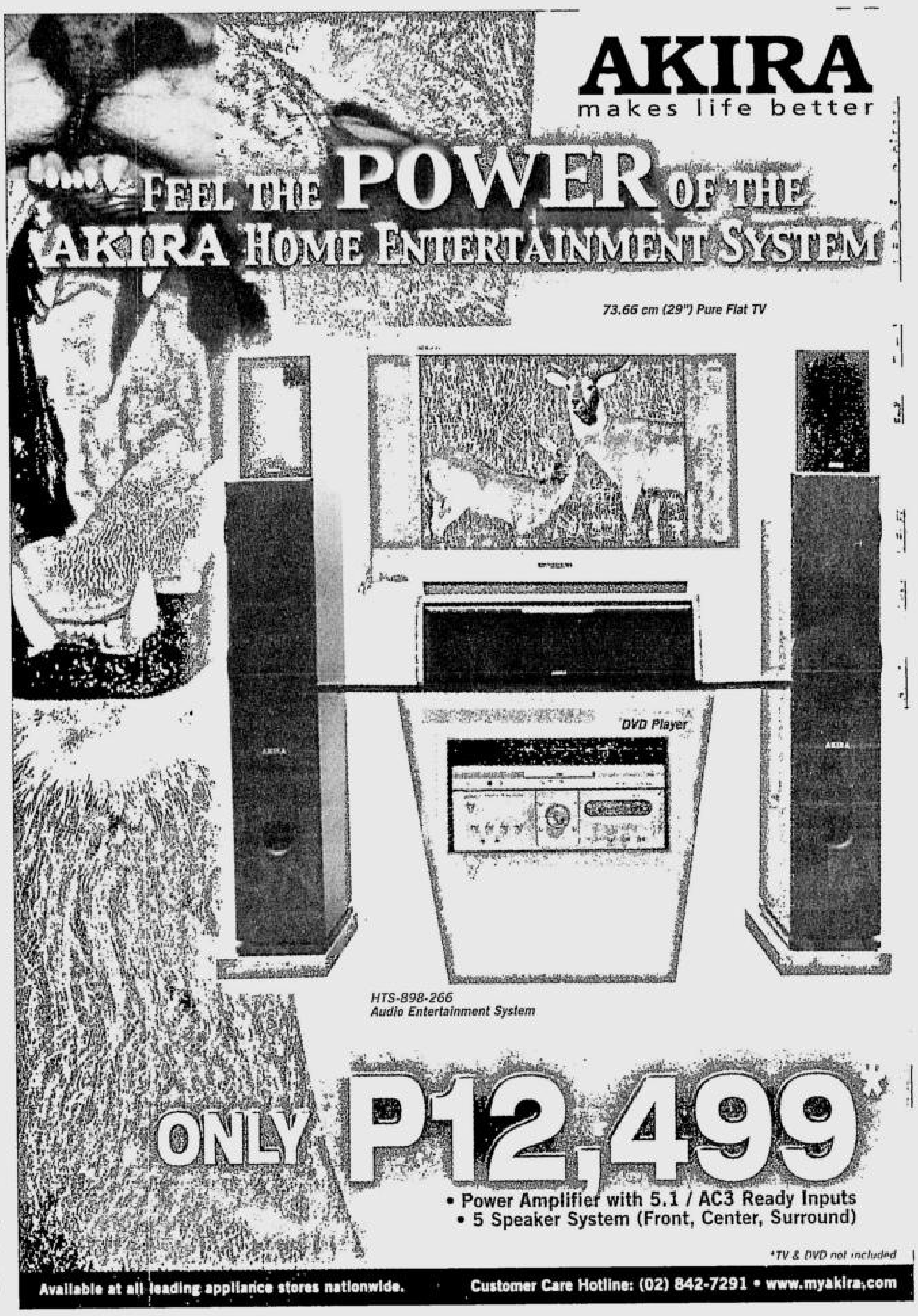
Police reports said the RGA is comprised of former NPA rebels allegedly led by Mel Lumbang, a barangay captain in Arayat, Pampanga. Police and military officials had tagged the RGA in a string of summary executions and ambushes since 1998.

Reports said the RGA band that the military encountered in San Rafael was involved in the summary execution of Bernardo Dizon, an employee of the National Irrigation Administration.

Policemen and Army soldiers exhumed Dizon's body at the foothills of Mt. Arayat, Pampanga in January this year.

In Cagayan, reports said Army soldiers overran a New People's Army camp in Baggao town on Sunday after an encounter.

The camp in Sitio Nangudulan in Barangay Agaman Norte had 12 huts for some 30 people, according to Lt. Col. Pompeo Paul Dario. *Carmela Reyes, Tonette Orejas and Ronaldo Dizon, PDI Central Luzon Desk*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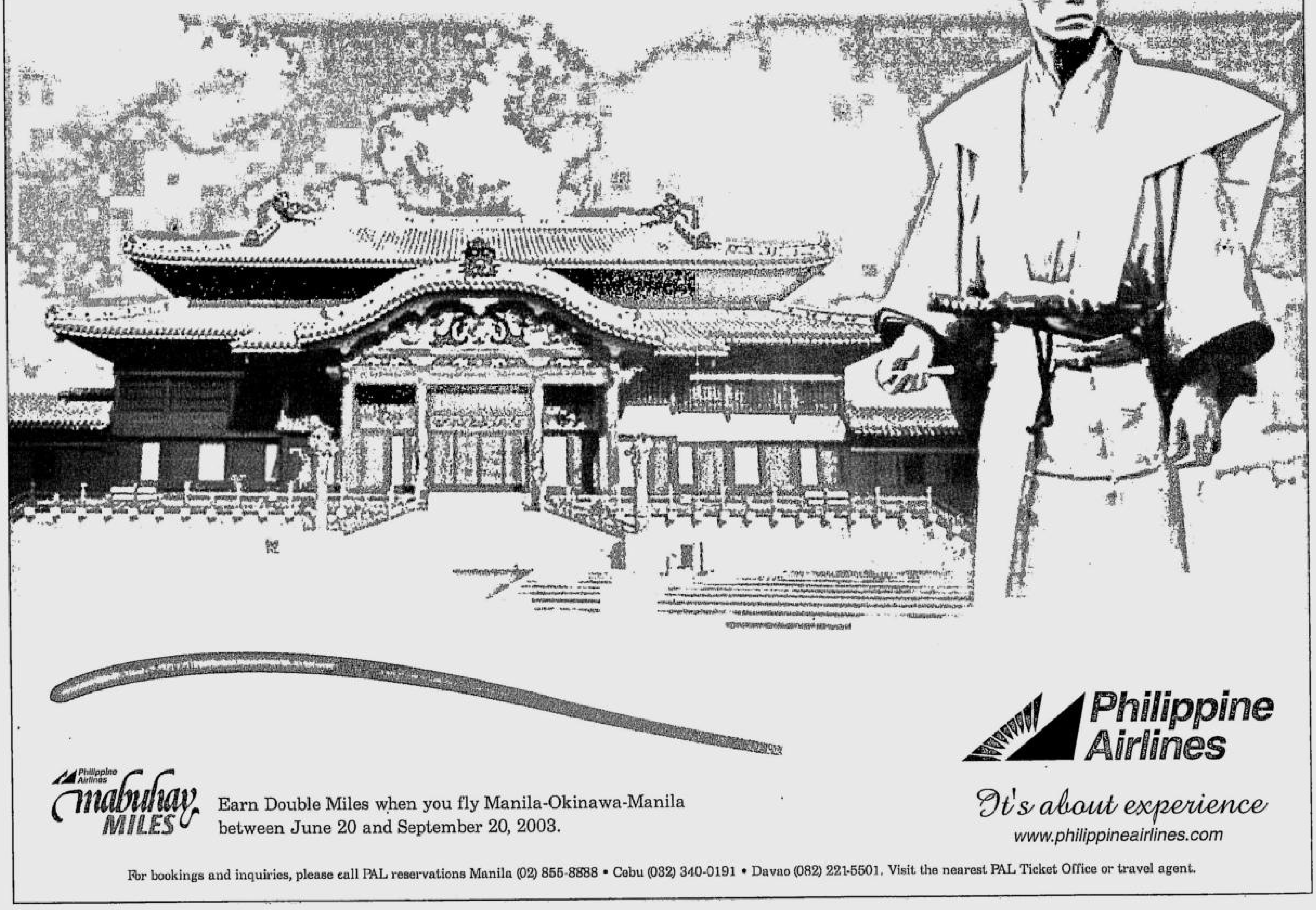

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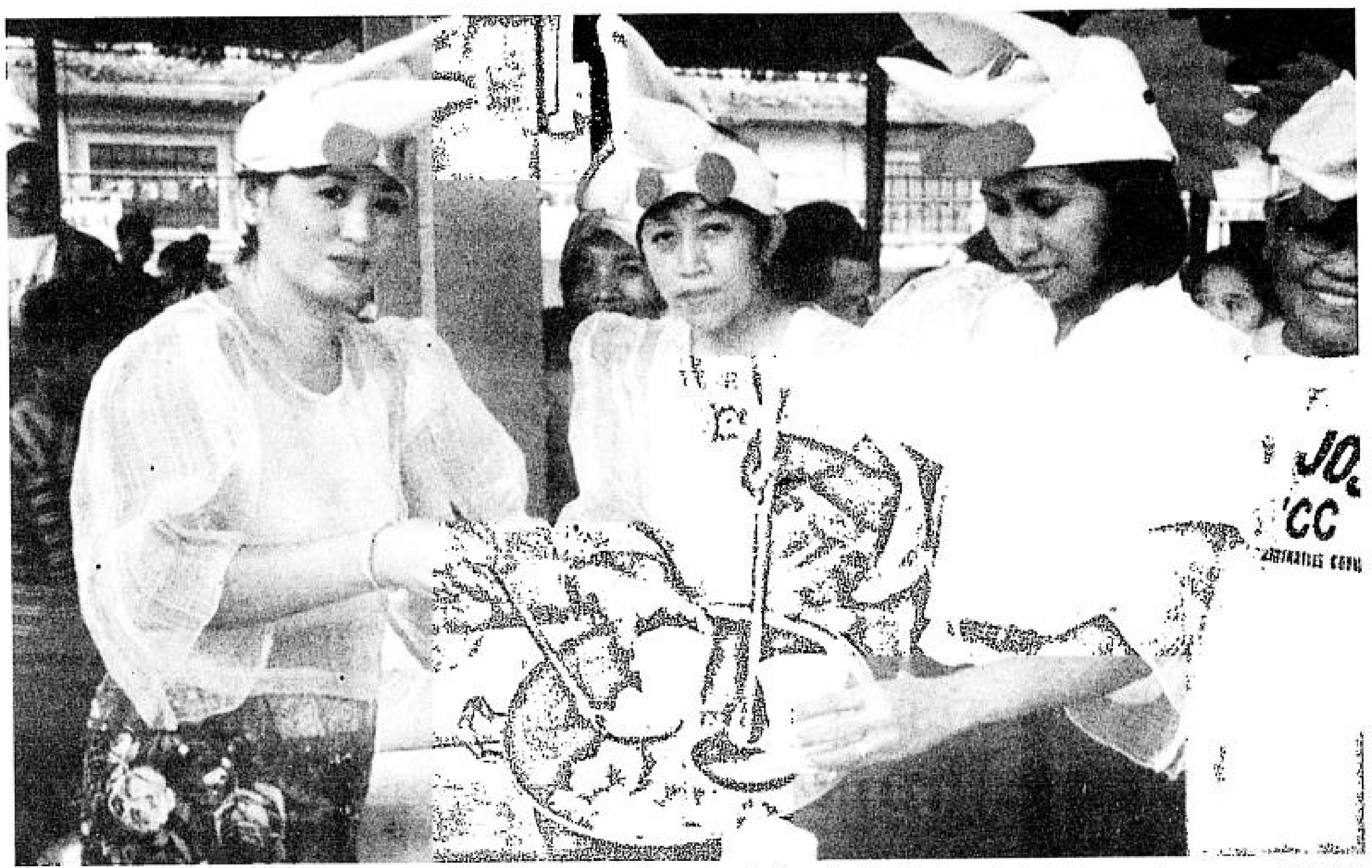
INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Batangas town holds first egg festival

By Mei Magsino
San Jose, Batangas

SINUAM, an egg soup cooked and served only in Batangas and is said to have many curative effects, became the centerpiece of this town's first egg festival held April 24 to 26.


Sinuam (egg soup) in styrofor cups were served during the three-day egg festival las t April in San Jose, Batangas. MEI MAGSINO

Sinuam is a soup that is cooked with garlic, onions, black pepper and salt in water.

When the mixture comes to a boil, an egg is cracked and dropped into it.

The result is an egg soup that has been proven to cure headaches, dizziness, colds, fevers and hangovers.

"It's actually the Batangas version of noodle soup," said Dr. Miguel Ambal, chair of Wincom Corp., a company that sells seeds and animal health products. "The only difference is that in sinuam, there is no artificial ingredient, and it is full of nutrients. No other province cooks and serves sinuam. You can find it only here in Batangas."

During the three-day festival, people lined up for free cups of sinuam as about 10,000 eggs per day were cooked and served to the townsfolk and local and foreign tourists.

Resolution

On the first day of the festival, the Batangas Egg Producers Association (Bepa) gave Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. a copy of a resolution urging President Macapagal-Arroyo to immediately address the concerns of the egg industry.

Lorenzo was the guest speaker of the festival's opening program.

Bepa president Antoliano Alday Jr. said swift action on the resolution by the Department of Agriculture and the President would help the country's egg industry.

San Jose town supplies about 40 percent of Luzon's daily egg requirements, according to Bepa studies. The egg industry has generated P16.6 billion or about 19 percent of the total value of poultry products in 2002.

But, like the pork and beef industry, the egg industry's situation has also become depressing.

The volume of powdered and processed egg products, known to have been imported from countries with cheaper production costs, has increased at an alarming rate.

The importation almost tripled from 600 tons in 1998 to 1,600 tons in 2002 and this led to prices of eggs plunging.

The importation of chicken and chicken parts has also gravely affected the prices of broiler chicken, since fertile or brown eggs intended for chick production are now being sold at very low prices.

The local egg industry is also burdened particularly by high feed costs due to the high tariff on corn and its substitutes. Corn makes up 50 percent of feeds. Prices of local corn are higher compared to those from neighboring countries.

The government has also neglected local corn farmers.

Bad publicity

The egg industry has also been getting bad publicity, with eggs supposedly having high cholesterol content.

Alday said Bepa is pushing for an egg-awareness campaign to tell the people the truth about eggs. He said "recent studies have found that (such) bad impression (proves) to be untrue."

"The fact is, eating an egg a day is okay, as it is a good source of protein and nutrients. But this information has not been properly disseminated to millions of Filipinos. (This has prevented them) from taking enough nourishment from eggs, which is a cheaper complete food."

But he said the demand for fresh eggs in the country cannot be further improved due to the inflexible pricing of retailers in wet markets and warehouses.

Thus, when producers have abundant supply, they suffer losses when they sell their eggs below break-even costs.

Urgent call

The Bepa is also calling on the Bureau of Animal Industry and the Livestock Development Council to address the different diseases of poultry.

"The presence of the Infectious Laryngotractheitis (ILT), which is a respiratory disease of the chicken and causes bleeding of the chicken's trachea and eventually leads to its death in two to five days, has also hurt the egg producer's industry," Alday said.

He said the disease has not affected the eggs, but has killed so many egg-laying chicken lately.

In 2002, the Bureau of Animal Industry imported ILT vaccines good for a million chickens but stopped, as it wants to prove first that the disease is really present in the country.

Another concern is that the virus might have reverted to its original form.

But the BAI does not have to investigate anymore. Alday said the ILT virus is now killing the egg industry of Pampanga and Rizal provinces.

"In this situation, only the traders earn while the rest of us egg-raisers suffer the consequences," Alday added, "If this condition continues, then the local egg producers may soon close down their operations and (it would) eventually lead to the death of our local egg industry. So the Sinuam Festival is not just a festival, it is also our battlecry to keep the industry alive."

Festival

During those three days, boiled eggs, *balut* (unhatched duck chicks) and quail eggs were given to the people who participated in the festival.

The feeds and animal health companies that put up booths at the exhibit grounds gave away live chicks to those who went to see the exhibit.

"This is our way of making the people aware that eggs are good for your health and are complete foods," Alday said. It is also their chance to inform the people of the situation of the country's egg industry, he added.

Bepa is composed of the province's poultry raisers, feed millers, and animal health companies.

The festival was held by the Bepa in cooperation with the National Federation of Egg Producers of the Philippines, the municipal government, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Tourism.

Seminars on poultry raising were conducted the next day, as experts from the different poultry supplies and animal health product companies lectured on the latest technology on poultry raising.

On the third day, 10 dance groups from Batangas and Laguna participated in street dancing. The dance troops wore costumes made from feed sacks elaborately decorated with egg shells. Some even wore earrings made from empty eggshells.

Other dance groups had their headdresses made from empty eggshells and chicken feathers.

Most wore costumes made from chicken feathers.

JOURNALISTS join an exposure tour of Mt. Banahaw, one of the environmentally critical spots in Southern Tagalog. COURTESY OF TANGGOL KALIKASAN-ST

Mt. Banahaw needs rest, rehabilitation

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Lucena City

WITH the continuing devastation of Mt. Banahaw, environmentalists agree that it needs a rest, too.

Thus, a proposal to temporarily seal off the mountain from visitors is now being seriously considered, according to the local environment official of the town in its mountain base.

This is to give way to the rehabilitation of Mt. Banahaw, Manny Calayag, Dolores municipal environment and natural resources officer, told the INQUIRER.

Calayag lamented that tons of trash were left by the pilgrims after Holy Week. "It's unfortunate that most of the annual visitors' still have not shown enough environmental concern."

One of the reasons behind the high volume of garbage, he said, was that the number of visitors who climbed the mystical mountain this year was much higher than last year's.

Environmentalist lawyer Asis Perez, director of Tanggol Kalikasan in Southern Tagalog, an environmental legal defense center, declined to give a time frame for the planned closure.

"It will all depend (on the) scientific study that we will initiate with the help of the environmental scientist community," he said.

Calayag said the idea cropped up during the recent provincewide watershed summit.

"We have to meet all Mt. Banahaw multi-sectoral stakeholders to arrive at a consensus," he said, adding that they expect a howl of opposition from the pilgrims.

"If the action of the religious worshippers will pose a threat and danger or affect health and public safety, that's another matter. But it will all depend on the findings of the scientific community," Perez said.

He said initial research by several scientists revealed the presence of "coliform" in several major sources of water in the area.

He said all the towns around the mountain sourced their potable water from Mt. Banahaw.

Mt. Banahaw is southeast of Manila within the municipalities of Lucban, Tayabas, Sariaya, Candelaria and Dolores in Quezon and municipalities of Rizal, Nagcarlan, Liliw and Majayjay and San Pablo City in Laguna.

Cecilia Gascon, an environmental scientist from Lucban, Quezon, reported in one of her writings that saving Mt. Banahaw is the present concern of the scientist community.

Gascon reported that "Mt. Banahaw is traversed by eight rivers namely: Olla, Manipis, Sta. Cruz, Liliw, Dalitiwan, Malinao, Bakong and Lozaan. Because of the abundance of water even during dry season, it is locally known as Volcan de Agua," Gascon added.

Five groups of thermal springs are also found on Mt. Banahaw. These are Tiaong–San Pablo hot/warm springs; Bakia (Botokan) warm/cold springs; Sampaloc (Apasan) warm springs; Mainit (West Palale) hot/warm springs; and Cagsiay hot/warm springs. These springs are found at elevations of less than 150 meters.

Calayag said the mountain has also shown alarming signs of slowly giving in to the pressure brought by the volumes of visitors.

"Mt. Banahaw's load capacity, especially on its trails, has now signs of possible trouble," he said.

Last Holy Week, Mt. Banahaw was hit by four separate forest fires believed caused by burning candles left by pilgrims.

Baby with cataract, heart defect needs help

By Emir Gamis
Sorsogon City

NICOLE Tumalad, who will turn two years old in July, was waving her hands several inches before her eyes.

She poked at her eyelids in what seemed to be an attempt to massage them.

Nicole appeared healthy but her eyes rolled unusually, showing whitish flecks on her pupils.

She has a congenital eye cataract and a congenital heart disease (CHD) called pulmonary stenosis (PS), an abnormality in the pulmonary bulb from the lungs to the heart.

Her parents surmised that she could only see shadows because of poor light perception that greatly hampered her motor development. She could not crawl or walk yet and her words are limited to 'Mommy,' 'Daddy,' 'Ate,' and 'no.'

At six months, her parents noticed that she could not follow movements and seemed unmindful of the toys and most of the things around her.

Measles

Donna Tumalad, 30, her mother, recalled contracting measles while Nicole was just one month in her womb and believes this led to Nicole's ailments.

A month after her Caesarian delivery, her doctor noticed Nicole's heart murmur and diagnosed her with CHD.

She also contracted an infection, causing pus to come out of her eyes. Opthalmologists later diagnosed her with congenital eye cataract.

An echocardiography test in the Bicol Heart Center, with the help of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, further diagnosed Nicole's heart ailment as CHD-PS, with right atrial enlargement and right ventricular enlargement.

Help

Through the Internet, they sought help from different groups for Nicole's further treatment.

They knew Nicole needed more medical attention but they could not afford the costs.

In February, an international philanthropic group allayed their fears of the possible ill effects of an operation, saying her heart defect was "very simple" and that "sometimes heart surgery is not needed for PS."

Finally, a breakthrough came when the St. Luke's Medical Center (SLMC) agreed to assess if Nicole would qualify for their social service program, which offers free consultation, although the family still has to share part of the cost of diagnostic procedures and surgery.

They have completed SLMC's requirements but could not go to Manila for Nicole's treatment yet.

"The safest way to travel with our child is through air transport. Airline tickets, not to mention all other expenses, may cost us something we can hardly afford," Nicole's father, Jun, said.

"We need help. We are financially constrained, and the possibility of SARS in Manila scares us," he added.

Jun works as a utility worker in the Provincial Information Office while Donna is an elementary school teacher.

Those who want to help Nicole may contact Jun Tumalad at (056)211-21-13 or Donna Tumalad at (0918)5078192 or the INQUIRER Southern Luzon Bureau at (052)-8208402)

Piatco wants $500M ...

From page A1

Macapagal administration "has to pay back, plus interest."

Total cost

Chavez placed Piatco's total expenses in constructing the passenger terminal at $500 million. "And the government should pay that," he said.

"All legitimate commercial claims shall be justly compensated. There will be absolute fairness, transparency and due regard to the public interest," Ms Macapagal said. Her administration claims the airport contracts are tainted with irregularities.

The approval of the Piatco contracts spanned three administrations from Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada to Ms Macapagal.

Chavez said Ms Macapagal, "under whose term the 3rd supplement to the Amended and Restated Concession Agreement was approved," should also reimburse the P780 million paid to the government by Piatco.

The amount represented the P180 million for the relocation of the Air Force hangar, and the P300-million payment to the government for every year of construction. So far, Piatco had paid P600 million representing two years of construction.

Ms Macapagal assured German investor Fraport that it would recover its investments in Naia 3. She instructed Philippine Ambassador to Germany Minerva Jean Falcon to inform the German government that her administration would "see to it that (Fraport is) treated fairly and equitably."

Malacañang wants graft cases filed against officials who awarded Piatco the contract to build Naia 3.

At the same time, Ms Macapagal instructed Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong to seek the Office of the Ombudsman's "appropriate action" on the Supreme Court decision nullifying Piatco's contract.

Bunye said the President gave the order in view of the high court's ruling that "those responsible for the flawed bidding should be held accountable."

But Bunye did not say who should be charged.

Ms Macapagal said it was up to the Office of the Ombudsman to press "further legal actions against errant parties."

Moises Tolentino Jr., Piatco vice president for public affairs, said the consortium would sue the government for damages because the contracts stated that declaring any part of the contract illegal was equivalent to a breach.

Tolentino said this was one of Piatco's options should the Supreme Court rule with finality that its build-operate-transfer contract with the government was null and void.

However, the amount the consortium would seek from the government would depend on what the International Court of Arbitration would decide.

The government and Piatco were expected to go through arbitration proceedings by the latter part of the month, according to Tolentino. He said a three-member arbitration team would "lead to the determination of who is really at fault and how much the aggrieved party is entitled to" in terms of compensation.

But he admitted that if the high court decided with finality that Piatco's BOT contract was null and void, the arbitration court had no power to overturn the decision. While saying this, Tolentino stressed that the consortium was not giving up without a fight.

Bribe

In Congress, Senate President Franklin Drilon said the Commission on Audit should audit the expenses incurred in the construction of the passenger terminal so that Piatco's stakeholders could be reimbursed properly. But Drilon said the "bribe" given to Alfredo Liongson should not be part of the reimbursement.

Drilon was referring to allegations that Liongson, who was paid $2 million in public relations service fees by Piatco and was reportedly a dummy for influential persons illegally involved in the build-operate-transfer project.

For his part, Sen. Joker Arroyo said the terminal could not be be used for now because of Piatco's failure to construct an access road that would connect the new airport with the current international airport, which is to be converted into a domestic airport.

Arroyo said the construction of the access road, an underground tunnel, to connect the two airports was provided for in the original contract between Piatco and the government.

Reconsider

Chavez said his clients still believed that the high court would reconsider, and eventually reverse its unfavorable ruling.

"We are banking on dependable legal grounds for the Supreme Court to revisit its decision, and eventually reconsider it," he said.

Piatco has 15 days to appeal the decision. It has yet to receive a copy of the ruling.

Chavez said Piatco would cite the dissenting opinion of Associate Justice Jose Vitug. "We will even expound on the dissenting opinion," which was adopted by two other associate justices.

In a four-page separate opinion, Vitug said the Supreme Court "is bereft of jurisdiction to hear the petitions at bar."

He explained that the high court shall exercise original jurisdiction over petitions for prohibition, but the petitions at bar prayed for the nullification of the Piatco contracts.

"As the court has so often exhorted, it is not a trier of facts," said Vitug. He noted that the petitions "are actions for declaratory relief," not prohibition.

Actions for declaratory relief should be lodged with the regional trial courts, not the high court, according to Vitug.

No jurisdiction

"The Supreme Court assumes no jurisdiction over petitions for declaratory relief which are cognizable by Regional Trial Courts," he said.

He believed the court "may not at good liberty to intrude, in the guise of sovereign imprimatur, into every affair of government."

"What significance can still then remain of the time-honored and widely acclaimed principle of separation of powers if, at every turn, the court allows itself to pass upon at will the disposition of a co-equal, independent and coordinate branch in our system of government? I dread to think of the so varied uncertainties that such an undue interference can lead to," Vitug said.

Chavez said it was both "immaterial and illogical" for the Supreme Court to nullify the contract based on the "irrelevant conclusion that Paircargo has no financial capacity to construct the project." Paircargo was the predecessor firm of Piatco.

"These observations are best debunked by the completed structure that could now, except for very minor additions, be operated by the government," he said.

Chavez said the government acted in a "very dishonorable manner," pointing out that criminal charges had been filed against transportation and Piatco officers before the Office of the Ombudsman.

"All these three cases were dismissed upon the finding by the Ombudsman that the Piatco contracts are valid and aboveboard," said Chavez, a former solicitor general.

The cases included the plunder case filed against Edgardo Manda, Manila International Airport Authority general manager. *With reports from Dona Pazzibugan and Christine O. Avendaño*

TIME LINE

Naia 3: Like a telenovela

LIKE a long-drawn telenovela, the Naia Terminal 3 project was mired in controversies as it passed through two proponents and three presidents. It was conceptualized by the country's business taipans in 1993. It later went through two congressional hearings, two inquiries by the Ombudsman, two review processes by the National Economic and Development Authority, and other reviews by the Department of Justice and a presidential adviser for special projects.

1993—Six taipans offer to construct Naia Terminal 3 under build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme. The taipans—John Gokongwei, Andrew Gotianun, Henry Sy, Lucio Tan, George Ty and Alfonso Yuchengco—organize Asia's Emerging Dragon Corp. (AEDC).

Oct. 5, 1994—The AEDC submits to DOTC an unsolicited proposal to undertake the Naia 3 project.

1995—DOTC endorses proposal to Investment Coordinating Council (ICC) in March and in a meeting requested by AEDC in November, President Fidel Ramos approves 10-million passenger capacity for new terminal.

Feb. 13, 1996—Neda Board grants 1st pass approval of project.

Sept. 20, 1996—Lone challenge is submitted by consortium of People's Air Cargo (Cheng Yong's company) and Warehousing Co. Inc., Philippine Air Ground Services and Security Bank.

Oct. 16, 1996—The DOTC/MIAA PBAC for Naia IPT3 opens third envelope submitted by AEDC and Paircargo and Associates which contained their respective financial proposals to government.

AEDC offers to pay government P5M a year for duration of agreement.

Paircargo and Associates offer to pay the government P300M for first two years of construction and P510M annually for next two years, P610M for the next two years and finally P710M thereafter up to end of concession agreement. In addition, annual percentage of gross revenues will be paid to the government by the concessionaire (i.e., 5 percent of gross revenues from Y1-Y5, 7.5 percent from Y6-Y15, 10 percent from Y16-25).

Dec. 3, 1996—AEDC fails to match challenger's offer.

Feb. 27, 1997—SEC issues Certificate of Registration of Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc. (Piatco) to PairCargo and its partner Fraport of Germany.

April 18, 1997—AEDC files suit with Pasig City RTC against members of DOTC/MIAA PBAC and the head of PBAC Technical Committee.

July 12, 1997—Contract is signed between the DOTC and MIAA represented by then Secretary Arturo Enrile and Piatco represented by Henry Go.

Nov. 26, 1998—President Estrada amends contract which was later supplemented twice (on August 1999 and September 2000).

Aug. 19, 1999—Neda Board grants 2nd pass approval of project.

March 7, 2000—Committee on Transportation and Communications of the House of Representatives finds Piatco contract regular and aboveboard.

March 2001—PAL and major airport firms under Manila International Airport-Naia Airport Service Operators (Maso) urge government to junk Piatco deal.

July 2001—Maso appeals to DOTC Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez to review concession agreement with Piatco.

September 2001—Maso files P76-million plunder case against Alvarez. House transportation committee on December 2001 upholds validity of Piatco contract.

December 2001—Gloria Tan is appointed presidential adviser for special projects and orders her to look into Piatco contract in January 2002.

June 3, 2002—DOTC Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez is bypassed by Commission on Appointments. CA wanted to hear testimony of Climaco.

Aug. 29, 2002—Climaco tells Senate blue ribbon hearing that government would take over Naia 3 after Piatco's German partner, Frankfurt Airport Services Worldwide (Fraport), agreed to be bought out for $400 million.

Aug. 31, 2002—President Macapagal-Arroyo calls Naia 3 contract "onerous." She creates Cabinet committee, headed by Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, to evaluate Fraport's proposed "amicable settlement."

Nov. 28, 2002—Acting Justice Secretary Merceditas N. Gutierrez releases memorandum saying "1997 CA (concession agreement) is void."

Nov. 29, 2002—GMA annuls controversial series of contracts granted to Piatco.

Dec. 3, 2002—Piatco asks SC to issue TRO to stop government from taking over Naia 3.

Dec. 4, 2002—Senate blue ribbon committee concludes Piatco contract null and void from the start.

Dec. 10, 2002—SC orders Malacañang and Piatco to sit down and settle Naia Terminal 3 controversy because "public interest is involved."

March 10, 2003—Piatco informs Supreme Court that it had filed request for arbitration with secretariat of ICC's International Court of Arbitration.

March 25, 2003—Piatco's foreign partner Fraport writes off investment in Naia 3 worth $383 million.

April 9, 2003—Fraport declares it will bring case to World Bank for arbitration if Manila fails to come up with a satisfactory solution by August.

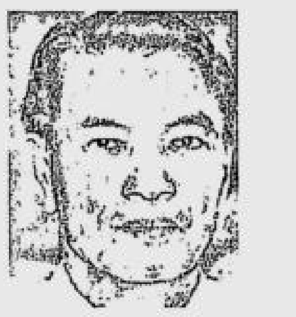
May 5, 2003—Supreme Court declares Piatco contracts "null and voild."

2PDI Research

RAMOS

ESTRADA

MACAPAGAL


TAN

CHENG YONG

ALVAREZ

CLIMACO

YASAY

CHAVEZ

High court voids PEA-Amari deal

From page A1

"Of course, I'm very happy about the final resolution of the Supreme Court. I have been proven right all along that the Constitution prohibits the sale of public lands to private corporation," he said.

In an 8-5 vote, with one abstention, the high court "denied with finality" the separate motions for reconsideration filed by the government, through the PEA, and the private developer Amari Coastal Bay Development Corp.

The other motions—for the inhibition of Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, redeliberation of the case and setting the case for hearing on oral argument—were "likewise denied."

The decision was written by Carpio, and concurred in by Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and Associate Justices Jose Vitug, Artemio Panganiban, Leonardo Quisumbing, Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez, Conchita Carpio-Morales and Romeo Callejo Jr.

Associate Justices Reynato Puno, Consuelo Ynarez-Santiago, Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, Renato Corona and Justice Josue Bellosillo dissented.

Associate Justice Adolfo Azcuna did not take part in the deliberations and voting.

Reclamation projects

In its ruling dated May 6 but promulgated only yesterday, the high court emphasized that its decision did not bar private firms from participating in reclamation projects and receiving payment for their services.

"What the decision prohibits, following the explicit constitutional mandate, is for private corporations to acquire reclaimed lands of the public domain," the SC said.

It explained that it was not prohibiting "directors, officers and stockholders of private corporations, if they are Filipino citizens, from acquiring at public auction reclaimed alienable lands of the public domain."

The SC said that private entities were barred from acquiring "not more than 12 hectares per individual, and the land thus acquired becomes private land."

Just as in the case of Philippine International Air Terminals Co., the high court wants the government to reimburse PEA and Amari for all their reclamation expenses.

This modified the earlier ruling, which declared that PEA would no longer be reimbursed by Amari in the amount of P1.8 billion, representing the actual cost of partially reclaiming the Freedom Islands.

However, PEA could lease the lands to private corporations but might not sell or transfer their ownership.

The latest ruling said that "despite the nullity of the Amended JVA, Amari is not precluded from recovering from PEA in the proper proceedings, on a quantum merit basis, whatever Amari may have incurred in implementing the Amended JVA prior to its declaration of nullity."

In denying the motion for reconsideration, the SC cited two main grounds:

First, the SC said that both the 1973 and 1987 Constitutions banned private entities from holding, except by lease, alienable or saleable lands of the public domain.

"The prevailing law before, during and after the signing of the Amended JVA is that private corporations cannot hold, except by lease, alienable lands of the public domain. The decision has not annulled or in any way changed the law on this matter," said the SC.

Second, the submerged areas of Manila Bay, being part of the sea, are inalienable and beyond the commerce of man, "a doctrine that has remained immutable since the Spanish Law on Waters in 1886. Clearly, the decision merely reiterates, and does not overrule, any existing judicial doctrine."

"Under Article 1409 of the Civil Code, contracts whose 'object or purpose is contrary to law,' or whose 'object is outside the commerce of men,' are 'inexistent and void from the beginning.' The court must perform its duty to defend and uphold the Constitution, and therefore declares the Amended JVA null and void ab initio," the SC added.

Chavez said the decision should not be a surprise to Amari.

"If there are investors who lost in this investment, it is only because they have failed to exercise due diligence in the transaction," he said.

SC spokesperson Ismael G. Khan Jr. said Amari had it coming.

TIMELINE

PEA-Amari: 'Grandmother of scams'

April 25, 1995—Public Estates Authority (PEA) enters into a Joint Venture Agreement with Amari Coastal Bay and Development Corporation to develop Freedom Islands and reclaim an additional 250 hectares of submerged areas surrounding the islands, per the Master Development Plan of the Southern Reclamation Project-MCCRRP (Manila-Cavite Coastal Road and Reclamation Project). The Amari consortium includes Prime Orion Phil. Inc. (Filipino-owned), Ital-Thai Development and Centasia Group (both Thai-owned), Cosco Land and Amari Holdings (both Filipino-owned).

June 8, 1995—President Fidel Ramos through Executive Secretary Ruben Torres approves the JVA.

Nov. 29, 1996—Senate President Ernesto Maceda denounces Amari deal as the "grandmother of all scams." Two Senate committees investigate Amari deal.

Sept. 16, 1997—Senate Committee concludes that the reclaimed lands are public domain, the certificates of title covering are thus void and the agreement itself is illegal.

April 13, 1998—Antonio M. Zulueta seeks nullification of the JVA. Court dismisses the petition.

April 27, 1998—Ex-Solicitor General Frank Chavez files a petition to nullify the JVA.

May 19, 1998—Ombudsman files graft charges against former Transportation Secretary Amado Lagdameo and seven other government officials for the P1.8-billion land deal orged with Amari.

May 28, 1998—Sandiganbayan's fourth division orders the arrest of former PEA Chair Wainwright Rivera, former PEA deputy General Manager Justiniano Montano IV, former PEA Director Arturo Trinidad and former Chief Government Corporate Counsel Oscar Garcia. Former PEA General manager Amado Lagdameo, ex-PEA Directors Marylou Ventura, Theron Lacson, Manuel Berina and Gregorio Fider post bail of P30,000 each.

Manila Regional Trial Court orders the arrest of former Amari executives Chua Hun Siong, alias Frank Chua, and Chin San Cordova, alias Benito Co, broker George Trivino, and others.

March 23, 1999—PEA and Amari sign amended JVA.

May 28, 1999—Office of the President approves the amended JVA. Under the revised agreement, the PEA now controls 80 percent of the project equity.

June 22, 1999—Court denies Chavez petition for TRO.

June 30, 2002—Amari discloses that the project development cost has already amounted to P9.8 billion.

July 9, 2002—The Supreme Court declares the amended JVA null and void.

PDI Research, based on PDI archives and July 9, 2002 Supreme Court decision

'Inalienable natural resources'

THE SUPREME Court ruling promulgated yesterday stemmed from a July 9, 2002 full court decision, which had nullified the renegotiated Joint Venture Agreement between the Public Estates Authority and the Amari consortium.

In voiding the deal last year, the SC declared that the 592.15-hectares reclaimed from Manila Bay remained "inalienable natural resources of the public domain."

The Amended JVA had also sought to transfer to Amari ownership of 77.34 hectares of the 157.84-ha Freedom Islands.

But "Such transfer is void for being contrary to Section 3, Article 12 of the 1987 Constitution which prohibits private corporations from acquiring any kind of alienable land of the public domain," the SC said.

In its motion for reconsideration, Amari argued that the decision should be made to apply prospectively, not retroactively, to cover the JVA.

It believed that the existence of a statute or executive order prior to being adjudged void was an "operative fact" that required the court to honor the joint venture.

Amari was referring to presidential decrees and orders issued by Presidents Ferdinand Marcos and Corazon Aquino granting to PEA "parcels of reclaimed lands containing an area of 1,915,894 square meters."

The reclaimed lands include the Freedom Islands.

But in its final ruling, the SC refused to reconsider its July 9 decision, saying the motions for reconsideration reiterated mainly the arguments already discussed in the decision.

The reclamation of submerged areas in Manila Bay started in 1973, but it was only in 1977 when Marcos issued Presidential Decree No. 1084 creating the PEA.

In January 1988, Aquino issued Special Patent No. 3517 granting and transferring to PEA parcels of land reclaimed under the Manila-Cavite Coastal Road and Reclamation Project. *Michael Lim Ubac*

GMA standing squarely behind Armed Forces

From page A1

the soldiers risked their lives and many lost their lives," the Associated Press quoted Cimatu as saying.

AP also said Camiling, who headed the Southern Command in the early weeks of the abduction of Burnham and 19 others in 2001, denied on Tuesday the supposed collusion. He suggested that Burnham and the other captives might have been tricked.

'Misled'

"They were inside; their minds could easily be controlled by [the late Abu Sayyaf spokesperson] Abu Sabaya and the rebels, who could have fed them wrong information and acted out some drama," Camiling said. "How can she say they were soldiers? She was misled."

Asked by phone why there was no immediate order to investigate Burnham's claims, Bunye said: "It is an expression of the President's trust and confidence."

"Let's leave it at that," he added.

Earlier at his regular media briefing, Bunye declined to comment on the issue.

"I haven't read the book. I haven't heard [Burnham] make the comment," he said.

When reminded that the issue of collusion was raised earlier by such people as Cirilo Nacorda, parish priest of Lamitan, Basilan, Bunye said: "I have to be very candid. I don't have enough background to make a comment."

'It may happen'

Asked about Burnham's allegation that it was soldiers who killed her husband Martin and Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap during the rescue attempt, Garcia said the military's primary consideration during hostage situations was the welfare of the victims.

"We do accept that occasionally we can't prevent hostages or innocent bystanders [from being] caught in the crossfire," he said. "It may happen, but we do our best to prevent it. That is the way we operate. In a general case, it may happen. There is always a possibility that such a case would happen."

AP quoted Glicero Sua, a retired Army general who supervised the rescue, as saying that Burnham's account could be true. But he pointed out that there had been no conclusion on the source of the bullets that hit the hostages.

"The probability is there," Sua said, but he stressed that the military took pains to ensure the safety of the hostages.

In Davao City, the present Southcom chief Maj. Gen. Roy Kyamko said he had not read the book but would like "to talk to [Burnham] and ask her how she made the conclusion."

He said he would like to know in what unit of the military organization the alleged collusion happened.

But Kyamko also said Burnham was "just making a conclusion out of her observations."

Col. Daniel Lucero, public information officer of the AFP chief of staff, said Burnham's claim of collusion between the Abu Sayyaf and the military was yesterday's hottest issue in Camp Aguinaldo.

Only her perception

But Lucero refused to issue comments, and said the best person from whom to seek a reaction was Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, commander of the 1st Infantry Division during the hostage crisis.

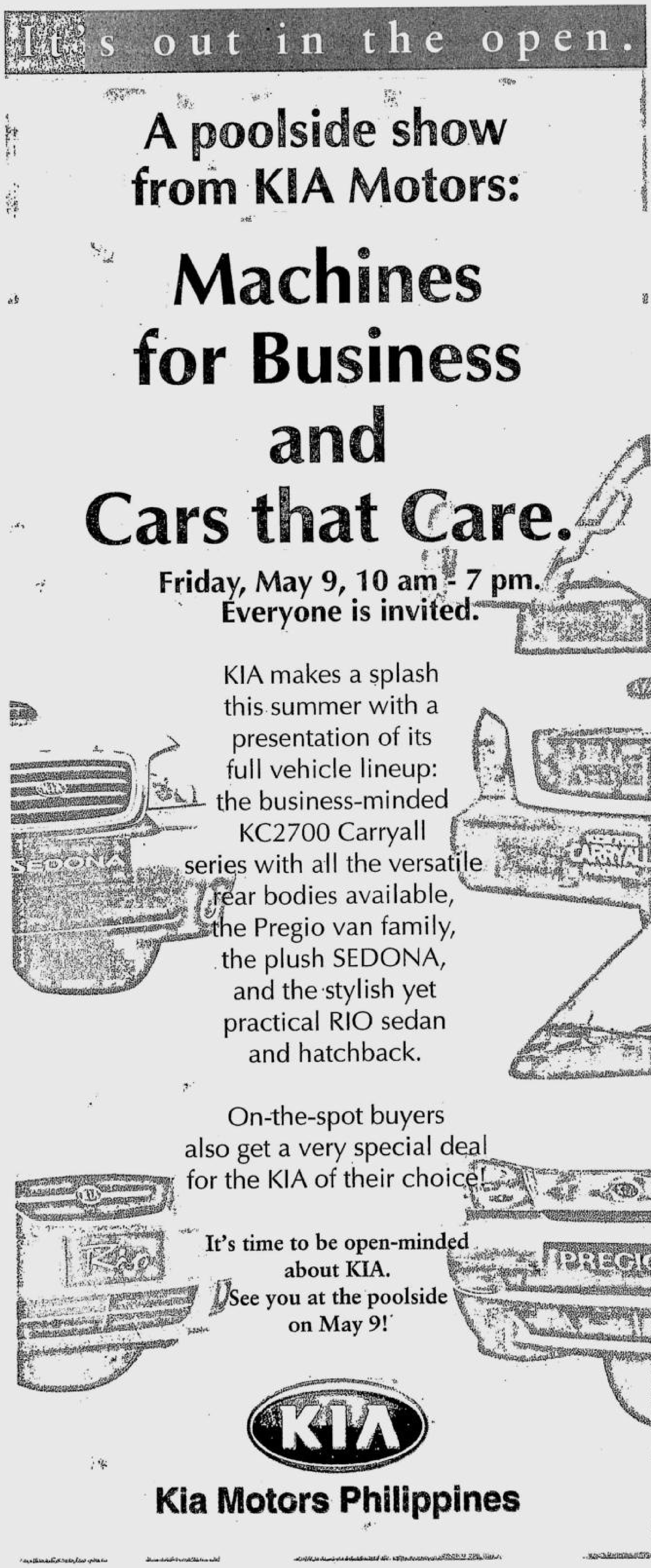
Dominguez, now chief of the AFP's Northern Luzon Command, could not be reached despite repeated attempts.

But a ranking military official who requested anonymity said Burnham's allegation was "biased."

"To generalize that the military is in collusion with that terrorist group is unbelievable," the official said. "We have lost lives in [going after these] people. Gracia Burnham is not in a position to give a balanced view of information."

He also said Burnham was "in the hands of her captors for more than a year, and her only source of information was the captors themselves."

"It is just her perception ... the things she was made to believe," the official added. "Her captors influenced her perception. It is like listening to a one-sided telephone conversation."



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See you at the poolside on May 9!

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Kia Motors Philippines

SC orders probe of 2 CA . . .

From page A1

tired SC Associate Justice Carolina Grino-Aquino to conduct the administrative investigation.

"The court resolved to refer the complaint in this case to (Grino-Aquino) for evaluation and or investigation, report and recommendation," the SC resolution read. It was signed by SC Clerk of Court Luzviminda Puno.

The SC order stemmed from a complaint lodged by a certain Antonio K. Litonjua on July 8, 2002 with the SC.

In the complaint, Litonjua charged CA Associate Justices Juan Enriquez Jr. and Bernardo Abesamis with the following offenses:

- Grave misconduct and gross ignorance of the law due to Enriquez's deliberate refusal to resolve the six pending motions listed in his affidavit-complaint for an unreasonable length of time.
- Abesamis' culpability for acting as a power broker and influence-peddler, and engaging in the practice of case-fixing.
- Grave misconduct on the part of Enriquez in demanding money from Litonjua—P1.5 million—in order to facilitate the release of the resolution of the case.
- Grave misconduct on the part of Enriquez and Abesamis "in knowingly frustrating the execution of the writ of final decision despite the SC's entry of judgment, in issuing a temporary restraining order ... stopping the execution of the judgment in the case before the regional trial court."

Original case

The case started when another group of Litonjuas—Eduardo Sr., and his namesake—sued the Bank of America on Feb. 12, 1993. Eduardo Sr. is the president of American Realty Corp. (ARC).

In a decision on May 12, 1995, the Pasig Regional Trial Court sided with the ARC, and ordered the bank to pay ARC P99 million in actual and compensatory damages and P5 million in exemplary damages.

On appeal, the CA affirmed the decision. When the matter was elevated to the SC, the high court reduced the exemplary damages from P5 million to P50,000. The decision became final on April 3, 2000.

On Nov. 20, 2000, ARC, through Eduardo Sr., entered into a compromise agreement with the bank "whereby the amounts awarded in the judgment of the (SC) were offset against the other claims of the BA against ARC."

But on April 6, 2001, another group—the Litonjua brothers Aurelio and Antonio—asked the RTC to execute the SC decision. The lower court issued a writ of execution on April 20, 2001.

This prompted the original claimants to file a petition for prohibition before the CA, contesting the issuance of the April 20 writ of execution. They claimed that a compromise agreement had already been entered into between ARC and BA.

On April 24 and June 25, 2001, TROs were issued by the CA stopping the execution of judgment of the lower court.

The TROs were issued by Enriquez, and concurred in by then CA Justice Presbitero Velasco and CA Justice Bienvenido Reyes.

On Aug. 7, 2001, the CA eventually dismissed the petition for prohibition, and ruled against the father and son.

Another decision

However, upon a motion for reconsideration, the CA special division issued another decision, again penned by Enriquez, granting BA's motion for reconsideration.

It also enjoined the lower court from enforcing its writ of execution.

Aggrieved, Antonio Litonjua filed on July 8, 2002 a complaint against the two CA justices.

He claimed that after the issuance of the earlier TROs, he allegedly received a call from Enriquez "requesting to see him at his office at the CA."

"Complainant Litonjua obliged and met Justice Enriquez at his office, who apologized to him for the issuance of TRO and preliminary injunction. Justice Enriquez allegedly told him that he had a commitment with Justice Abesamis, who represented the interests of the officers of ARC and BA," said the SC.

The complainant even claimed that Enriquez allegedly told him that the group that Abesamis represented "was very influential and had prepared a big amount of money for mobilization and judicial expenses."

He was allegedly assured by Enriquez that since he was the ponente, "the resolution of the case could be facilitated if a mobilization and judicial fund was available."

They then arrived at a sum of P1.5 million, said the SC, quoting the complainant.

Subsequently, after the full payment of the amount, the CA lifted the TROs.

But the complainant was stunned when the CA special division reversed the original decision lifting the TROs.

He then accused Enriquez and Abesamis of deliberately refusing to resolve the motion for reconsideration and the series of six motions filed from Dec. 5, 2001 to April 15, 2002.

In his defense, Enriquez said in a counter-affidavit to the SC that the amended decision was issued by the whole special division.

'Kabayan' edges out Roco in poll

From page A1

people's top choice if the May 2004 presidential elections were to be held today.

Twenty percent of the 1,200 respondents said they would vote for De Castro, while 18 percent preferred Roco, a lawyer and former senator, according to Pulse Asia

Pulse Asia, however, noted that because the survey had a margin error of plus or minus 3 percentage points, "either of the two personalities could actually be the top presidential pick of Filipino voters."

Roco, the man to beat in previous surveys, has announced he will run for president, while De Castro, who topped the 2001 senatorial elections, has not declared his intention to join the presidential race next year.

Following De Castro and Roco were presidential wannabe Sen. Panfilo Lacson and actor Fernando Poe Jr., both with 12 percent. President Macapagal-Arroyo was fifth with 9 percent.

Pulse Asia noted that despite Ms Macapagal's announcement last December that she would not run for reelection in 2004, she was included in the list for "academic research reasons."

Pulse Asia, however, said that even if she was included in or excluded from the list of choices, the effect would not be significant enough to affect the results.

With Ms Macapagal not running next year, 22.2 percent of the respondents said they would vote for De Castro; 19.3 percent for Roco; 12.9 percent for Poe and 12.4 percent for Lacson.

The survey showed that 45 percent of the respondents agreed that the President's decision not to run in 2004 was "right."

A total of 25 percent of the respondents disagreed while 29 percent of the respondents were undecided.

Vice presidency

Aside from nosing out Roco from the list of winning presidential candidates, De Castro was the No. 1 choice of the respondents for the vice presidency. Pulse Asia said that if he were to run for vice president, De Castro would get 19 percent of the votes.

De Castro's colleague in both the Senate and ABS-CBN, now Majority Leader Loren Legarda placed second with 10 percent; Poe and Lacson with 6 percent each; and Sen. Juan Flavier, 5 percent.

When the prospective presidential and vice presidential candidates were paired off, Roco emerged as winner with a Roco-Legarda team-up getting the approval of 19 percent of the respondents, according to the Pulse Asia survey.

This was followed by the Legarda-De Castro tandem, 12 percent; Lacson-Sen. Edgardo Angara, 9 percent; Roco-Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., 9 percent; De Castro-Sen. Manuel Villar, 9 percent; and Lacson-Legarda, 8 percent.

Pulse Asia said it conducted the survey on its own. It used multistage probability sampling for the survey.

On Tuesday, Pulse Asia released the results of the survey showing that Ms Macapagal's approval and trust ratings remained unchanged from that registered in November 2002.

The survey found that Ms Macapagal's withdrawal from the 2004 presidential race had "no net effect, whether positive or negative" on the public's perception and opinion of the chief executive.

In a two-sentence statement issued by Malacañang yesterday, the President said: "Ratings come and go."

"We are bent to sticking to our course unburdened by issues of popularity," she said.

'I'm going to start ...

From page A1

he was kind of trapped ... by some stones in this little pool, and I just reached down thinking he'll dart away, I'll never get him.

And I picked up this fish, and I looked at Martin and I said, "Look what I got!"

I said, "Do you want some of this?"

And he said, "No."

So I just stuck it in my mouth ... it was good.

* * *

Right (after the kidnapping, the Abu Sayyaf members) gave us their code of ethics to show us how great Islam was.

One of the first things I remember ... (Abu Sulaiman) said to me (was), "Would we ever touch your women? No, the Koran forbids that ... We never steal, we don't lie, we don't smoke, we don't drink, we dress modestly, unlike Americans..."

They treated us fairly well ... we were never tortured, we were never beaten...

They were very proud of the fact that ... if they ever have a Muslim society like they ... were fighting for in Afghanistan, they said (that under) Muslim law if you steal something we'll chop your hands off...

By that time, I'd seen so much thievery, I thought, "How can that be a good thing? This group would have no hands."

* * *

Martin gave the gospel at least once to everyone that spoke English; many times to the leaders, Sabaya, Silima (Sulaiman?). You know what though, those guys already knew the gospel. That wasn't news to them. A couple of them could recite John 3:16, it wasn't like they hadn't heard the gospel before. They had made a choice.

* * *

Yes, we dreamed about food, we talked about food all the time and maybe that made it worse, but it seemed to make us feel better. There were days we went without anything. I remember many occasions (when) we would stop for our noon meal and there was no food and they would pass around little containers of salt, and we would just put a little bit of salt in our hand and eat that.

* * *

(One day) this package showed up, just chock full of stuff, crackers, peanut butter, deodorant, soap, spice packets ... (I)t was wonderful and later that afternoon we ... weren't even thinking that it was Thanksgiving Day. What a neat thing, God sent us something on Thanksgiving Day.

* * *

I think (the soldiers) were probably doing as well as they could.

People would say, "It's a small island, how can they not find you?"

Well, if you're in the tall grass and the jungle trees, you know that you can't see over the ridge. There were times when we could hear them on the next ridge and they were close to us.

* * *

We knew, (although I don't) believe in luck ... that our "luck" was going to run out.

Martin died (during) our 17th gun battle, and those weren't just little gun battles, those were bullets whizzing over our heads. And we knew that one of these days, it wasn't going to whiz over our heads, it was going to hit us.

It was hard for us. Every once in a while we would sit down and remind ourselves who the good guys were and who the bad guys were.

* * *

I came face to face with a me that I'd like to say didn't exist ... When everything is taken from you, you are what you are, and oh the hateful things I would say and feel.

(T)here was one time I was really mad at (Commander) Musab. He was one of the leaders, and he had loaded Martin down with extra stuff, and I was so angry on behalf of Martin. Martin wasn't angry, but I was really upset.

I told Martin, "Someday God's going to judge that man and I hope I'm there to see it."

And he looked at me and said, "Oh Gracia, you don't want to be there to see that."

* * *

I think (it was) Week 10 (when) I realized that nothing was going to happen for a long, long time. And ... in my heart I just rebelled against the situation ... (I felt) hopeless—that's probably a good word. I think I decided right then that God didn't love me, because if God loved me I would be out of there.

(But Martin) said to me, "You know Gracia, it seems to me, either you believe it all or you don't believe it at all ... Scripture tells us that God loves us, and you can't pick and choose what scripture you're going to believe in and follow. Why don't you just accept what's true. We don't know why we're here, but we do know that God loves us. Why don't you just accept what's true."

(A)t that point, I pretty much gave in to God.

* * *

(Martin) always found something to laugh at, bless his heart...

I had made reservations for us at Dos Palmas, because he had just come back from a trip from the State. [illegible] he was going to have to [illegible] ver for another pilot that [illegible] to go back to the States. And I thought he needed one day of rest, and it was right around our anniversary, so I ... came up with this big idea so he could get over (his) jet lag.

(A)bout two days into our captivity, there on the boat, he looked at me with a twinkle in his eye and he said, "Gracia, this was a great idea, I think I'm over my jet lag!"

He just never stopped laughing, and if you knew Martin, he had a contagious laugh and we would laugh at anything we could find to laugh at.

* * *

(Martin, whose handcuffs had rusted and did not work anymore) couldn't leave me, he chose to stay there for me ... We would talk about, "Do you think we could escape? How far do you think we would get?"

And he would always say, "If we let this run its course and if somebody negotiates us out, we're going to get to go home to our kids. If we bolt and run and it fails, we're going to be dead."

* * *

(Martin and I) said (I love you) a lot. Muslims don't show affection a whole lot ... so we just tried to be very careful about that.

There were a few times (when) I just really felt ... I needed Martin to touch me ... to feel him touching me. So after the sun would go down, when no one could see, he would brush my hair.

And I would ... say every once in a while, "Do you think when everybody's asleep you could brush my hair tonight?"

* * *

(The day he was killed Martin) said to me, "You know Gracia, I don't know why the Lord has allowed this to happen, but today I've been thinking about Psalm 100, how we can serve the Lord with gladness. Just because we're here, doesn't mean we can't serve Him with gladness."

Then we prayed together (and) then we laid down for our nap and then gunfire started...

We'd been trained to hit the ground, but before I could even hit the ground I was wounded.

(I)t was wet ... because it had been raining, and I kind of slid down the (steep) hill, and I came to rest by Martin. And I looked over and he was bleeding from his chest, so I could tell he'd gotten shot in the chest.

And I knew from experience that that was not good...

(H)e just laid there, kind of like he was in a deep sleep, kind of like he was snoring, he was just kind of breathing heavy and all of a sudden he just got really heavy, and I had never been around anyone that was dying, so I thought maybe he just passed out.

I was doing my best to ... look dead, because the last thing I wanted was for the Abu Sayyaf to leave Martin there and cart me off into the woods. And Martin had always taught me to keep my head in a gun battle, so I was just lying there trying to look dead, and he got just really heavy. I could feel the weight.

(When the shooting stopped and I heard the soldiers talking) I very slowly started moving my hands around so they would know I was alive; I (didn't want to) scare them, I didn't want to get shot.

They saw me right away and they came down, and they couldn't get a good grip on me because I was wet and it was muddy. So they started dragging me up the hill and I looked back at Martin and he was white.

That's when I knew.

Gracia: Troops, Abus in cahoots

From page A1

ipinos and foreigners from the Malaysian resort island of Sipadan and held them hostage for months in Sulu.

As in the 2001 kidnappings, the Sipadan abduction was marked by accusations from ex-hostages that government officials wanted in on the ransom payments.

The then hostage negotiator, Robert Aventajado, flagship projects adviser to President Joseph Estrada, was accused by German hostage Warner Wallert of forcing the ransom demand up and taking part of the money.

Aventajado has denied this.

Burnham's book connected the Abu Sayyaf to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist organization. She said that in May 2001—three months before the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States—her captors told Martin Burnham to say in a ransom message that he was being held by "the Osama bin Laden group."

She also disputed the Abu Sayyaf's claims that it never received a $330,000 ransom payment made for her and her husband's release. She did not disclose the source of the money.

IN CAPTIVITY: Weary, tired, and hungry, an emaciated Burnham couple.

Fried chicken, etc.

Burnham recounted how some of her captors gleefully spent their share of the ransom money. With each group member getting at least $200, some bought huge sacks of cookies, one bought a big tub of fried chicken, another bought a tape player, and some music.

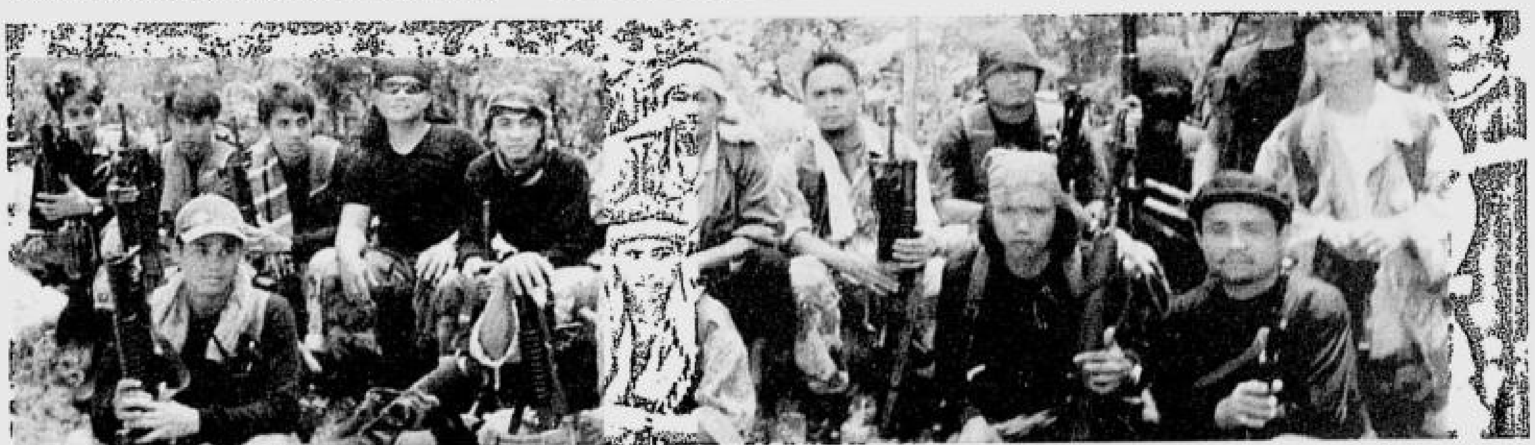
Contrary to earlier claims of the Philippine military, Burnham said, it was gunfire from Philippine soldiers that wounded her and killed her husband and Yap during the rescue operation in a mountain forest.

She said the injuries came before the bandits were able to take position and return fire.

The book also reports for the first time details about the beheading of American hostage Guillermo Sobero, including reportedly his last words: "Oooh, oooh, don't kill me! I want to see my sons!"

Alberto Sobero said he "almost got sick" when he read about his brother's beheading, even though an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation had earlier confirmed the details.

"I can't believe such cruelty exists in this world—nothing that any human being can do merits that kind of treatment," he said. *With reports from AP*



THE GANG'S all here including the rarely photographed leader Kaddafy Janjalani, 2nd from left front row. Another leader, Radulan Sahiron, 2nd from right, front row (with headband). They pose inside their jungle hideout somewhere in Sulu on July 16, 2000. AP

Ex-hostage, Nacorda elated by revelations

From page A1

her request, somewhere near the US Embassy in Manila where she recuperated before being flown to her native Kansas in the United States.

Recio, his wife Divine, son RJ and sister-in-law Angie Montealegre, along with the Burnhams and their fellow American Guillermo Sobero, were among the 20 people abducted by the Abu Sayyaf from the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan on May 27, 2001.

The Recio couple and their son managed to escape from the Abu Sayyaf in Lamitan, Basilan, on June 2, 2001, but Montealegre was left behind. Recio testified at a Senate hearing on March 7 last year that he paid the bandits P1 million for Montealegre's release after six months of being held hostage.

"As early as the Lamitan incident, I knew that the Abu Sayyaf had a collusion with the military," Recio told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The bandit group was able to elude a military cordon in Lamitan, triggering suspicion of collusion and calls for official investigation.

Recio recalled that during their captivity, the Abu Sayyaf always found lots of food and medicines left along the road or in certain areas that the group happened to pass.

"The medicines were government-issued, so who else could have put them there?" he said.

Voice in the wilderness

Cirilo Nacorda, parish priest of Lamitan, Basilan, and once a hostage of the Abu Sayyaf, was also elated at news of Burnham's disclosures.

"I'm happy that at least other victims are saying the same thing," he said. "It's good that I am not the one talking this time. Before, it was like I was a voice in the wilderness. One person talking is not strong [enough] in court, but with the revelations of Gracia Burnham, the case [will become] stronger."

Nacorda, who testified at the Senate inquiry on the collusion issue and accused military officials of receiving payoffs from the Abu Sayyaf, also said that with Burnham's book, the government now had more reason to prosecute erring military commanders.

"The officials [involved] should be checked," he said. "Prosecute those scalawags in uniform and give justice to the Lamiteños."

From Palawan, the bandits transported their hostages to Lamitan. Rumors of collusion started when the bandits, along with their hostages, were able to escape even when they were already surrounded by government soldiers.

'Nothing happened'

Recio lamented that while he took the risk of telling the truth about the ransom payment and the purported collusion, "nothing happened" to the military officials concerned.

The House committee on national defense, chaired by Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay and which investigated the incident, issued a report saying that while ransom had indeed been paid, there was no evidence to show collusion between the Abu Sayyaf and the military.

The report was opposed by a number of congressmen.

In their own report, the Senate committees on national defense and on justice and human rights cited sufficient evidence to prove collusion, and recommended the court martial of three officers: Maj. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, Col. Juvenal Narcise and Maj. Eliseo Campued.

The report was signed by all the senators except for Sen. Gregorio Honasan.

Pichay said yesterday in a statement that his committee was standing by its report. But he said he would order the reopening of the investigation if Burnham's book contained "compelling evidence."

"We are very much aware that Mrs. Burnham suffered a grievous loss in the hands of the Abu Sayyaf, and we will evaluate her account to see if she has any new and compelling evidence that we can make use of to shed further light on the Lamitan incident," Pichay said.

Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers said Burnham should be invited to return to the Philippines to help prosecute the military officials who had supposedly colluded with the Abu Sayyaf.

"She's a credible witness because she had first-hand experience," Barbers said of the missionary. "Her statement would be given weight."

Barbers expressed regret that investigators had apparently not given credence to the testimony of witnesses, such as that of Recio.

He acknowledged that Burnham might not agree to return to the land of her tragic ordeal.

In that case, he said, Burnham could be asked to make a sworn statement before an American court, for use in the prosecution of those involved.

"Or maybe we can send some of our investigators [to the United States] to take her statement," he said.

Dining
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Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

LATE SPORTS

Realtors subdue Thunder

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PAOLO Mendoza hit a three-pointer and two free throws with less than two minutes to go as Sta. Lucia Realty repulsed Batang Red Bull, 95-89, last night in the PBA Samsung All Filipino Cup at the Philsports.

Mendoza's points allowed the Realtors to quell the Thunder's last-minute uprising and lifted them to an 8-7 record which assured them of at least a tie for a quarterfinal berth.

"All we want is not to be booted out," said SLR coach Alfrancis Chua. "I'm thankful with the win because it pushed us closer to safety."

It wasn't easy avoiding danger, though, as Red Bull consistently challenged Sta. Lucia's lead with sporadic scoring binges coming from Nelson Asaytono, Junthy Valenzuela and Willie Miller.

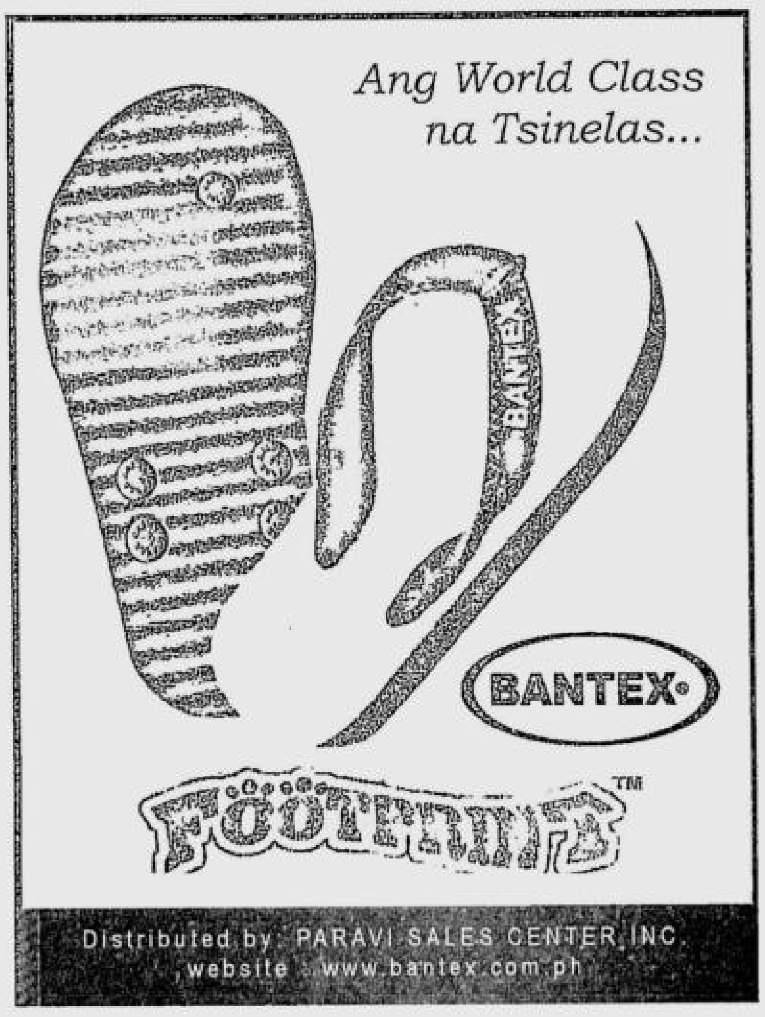
But the absence of a natural playmaker told heavily on the Thunder, whose league-leading card (11-4) was anchored on their smooth-flowing game usually run by the suspended Jimwell Torion and the injured Anton Villoria.

In the second game, San Miguel Beer beat Ginebra, 103-97, to lead Group A with a 7-6 mark. Ginebra tasted its fourth straight defeat and fell to 4-10.

Dondon Hontiveros starred for the Beermen with 29 points, highlighted by a perfect 8 of 8 three-point shooting.

Meanwhile, PBA commissioner Noli Eala said the league will stick it out with NBN as its broadcast carrier despite the problems in its letter of credit.

More sports on A25-A27



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Shabu lab busted inside posh village

By Christian V. Esguerra

ANOTHER SCORE
Interior and Local Government Secretary Joey Lina inspects the shabu and equipment used in manufacturing the illegal drug which were seized by the police during a raid Wednesday of a shabu laboratory inside a two-storey house (inset) in Multinational Village in Parañaque.
ERIK ARAZAS

POLICE seized around P20 million worth of shabu during a raid of a drug laboratory inside a plush Parañaque subdivision yesterday morning.

The two-story house at 79 Multinational Ave. in Multinational Village yielded approximately 11 kilos of high-grade shabu along with several ingredients and equipment used for the manufacture of the illegal substance.

Metro Manila police chief Reynaldo Velasco described the laboratory as "small time" compared to the one discovered last December in Valenzuela where P2.2 billion worth of shabu was found.

Members of the Regional Intelligence and Special Operations Office stormed the house at around 9 a.m., a day after they arrested Chen Jian Ting in a buy-bust operation just outside the village.

Chen, a Chinese national, yielded a kilo of shabu and pointed to a certain Janet Chen as his supplier, said Supt. Ronald Estilles, the city police chief.

The male Chen was one of at least four men who allegedly operated the shabu laboratory, Estilles added.

The house had already been abandoned by the time police secured a search warrant from a Manila court.

The property, relatively small compared to nearby houses, provided a viable disguise to the clandestine operation.

It is a bit isolated with low concrete walls on all sides. It also has a billboard saying the property is for sale.

The INQUIRER later phoned the number in the billboard and traced the house to a certain Jimmy Ngo.

The sales agent, who identified herself as Mrs. Geronimo, said the house was worth P6.5 million and was leased to Janet Chen.

"We had no idea that it had already been turned into a shabu laboratory," she told the INQUIRER.

Neither neighbors had any idea of the illegal operation.

"We only observed that the house was usually closed," a resident said. "Occupants were out most of the time. They usually came home between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m."

Last Sunday, the tenants, including a woman with Chinese features, stayed there most of the day, the neighbor said.

A silver Toyota Revo van and a maroon Toyota Crown sedan were also often seen in the garage, she added.

Yesterday's raid was the second in Parañaque since police discovered a big-time shabu laboratory in Barangay Sun Valley in November last year.

The Sun Valley laboratory was also traced to Chinese nationals believed to be linked to the notorious Hong Kong Triad.

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Floods in Metro to recede faster, MMDA assures

By Leila B. Salaverria

FLOODS will still be here during the rainy season, but they are expected to recede faster than usual, after the Metro Manila Development Authority cleaned up the esteros, canals, creeks and other waterways in the metropolis, according to MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando.

"If the floods were neck deep before, then this year they will only be waist deep," he told reporters yesterday at the weekly Ciudad Fernandina forum.

Fernando said 80 to 90 percent of waterways have been cleared of trash, but the speed in which garbage is dumped anew in the waterways might undermine the MMDA's efforts to reduce flooding.

During the rainy season, students in uniform holding their shoes and wading through floodwaters are a familiar site.

But even if floods continue to plague Metro Manila, at least the MMDA would soon have the equipment to deal with the problem.

Deputy Chair Cesar Lacuna said the MMDA would acquire two locally made amphibian vehicles, each worth P700,000.

He said the MMDA has ordered the vehicles two weeks ago. The vehicles would take 45 days to build.

Lacuna said the vehicles would be used for rescue operations during floods.

"Though we're trying to minimize flooding, there are some areas which will still be under water in the rainy season," Lacuna said in a recent interview.

He explained that the vehicle's wheels can fold up so that it would float when the water gets too deep.

This makes the 25-seater vehicle ideal for flood-prone areas, especially the Caloocan-Malabon-Navotas and Valenzuela district.

Full protection urged for all SARS fighters

By Philip C. Tubeza

INSTEAD of giving mere praises, President Macapagal-Arroyo should focus on giving full protection to public health workers against the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

This was the plea aired by militant health workers during a rally they held in Mendiola yesterday to commemorate Health Workers' Day.

"She did recognize us, but only up to that. If she is sincere, she should provide the funds for the public health sector," said Emma Manuel, Alliance of Health Workers president.

She said only around 10 percent of the 74,000 public health workers have masks to protect themselves against SARS.

Manuel added that at the San Lazaro Hospital and the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine, the medical staff are being forced to buy masks with their own money.

"Only those who have direct contact with SARS victims are adequately protected. But what about the others?" she asked.

Manuel said workers in emergency rooms in different government hospitals also do not have enough masks.

She also said that while the President continues to give praise to health workers, the administration has cut the budget of the public health sector by P1 billion from "P11.4 to P10.4 billion."

Taguig ex-mayor faces arson raps

By Volt Contreras

THE OMBUDSMAN yesterday filed arson charges against former Taguig Mayor Ricardo Papa and four other officials for allegedly using fire to evict squatter residents in a compound in Barangay Hagonoy in 1998.

The Sept. 12, 1998 fire destroyed structures worth about half a million pesos and included a mosque and the houses of 18 residents.

Charged with Papa were then municipal councilor Roberto Dionisio, municipal engineer Renato Maniquiz, acting chief of police Artemio Bermido, and barangay chair Rolando Olazo.

Preliminary investigation showed that the respondents not only demolished the structures but also set these on fire.

MURAKAMI PHOTOS BY ERIK ARAZAS

Japanese slain in his sleep in Parañaque

By Christian Esguerra

JAPANESE businessman Hiromasa Murakami, 58, was shot to death while he was sleeping inside his house on Levitown Avenue, Better Living Subdivision in Parañaque City yesterday morning.

Police said there were at least two assailants who had entered the victim's house between 4 and 4:30 a.m. yesterday.

The door had apparently been left open by Murakami's son Hiro, 19, when he went jogging, said city police chief Ronald Estilles.

But police are puzzled that Murakami's wife Carmelita, 52, has claimed that she had not seen her husband's killers even when she was sleeping beside Murakami when he was killed.

Police said Murakami had been shot six times.

Robbery was not the reason for the killing since nothing was missing in the house, police said.

But police said the killing could have been in connection with Murakami's business.

The Japanese exported pebbles for most of the 25 years that he lived in the Philippines, police added.

THE victim's wife Carmelita

Palace lifts suspension on Vicencio

By Tina Santos

MALACAÑANG yesterday lifted the preventive suspension order on Malabon City Amado Vicencio.

According to Department of Interior and Local Government Secretary Joey Lina, they received the Palace order yesterday afternoon.

Lina said the DILG made the recommendation to lift the suspension based on the temporary restraining order which the Court of Appeals had issued.

The political impasse in Malabon has been dragging on for weeks, while the city's executives—Vicencio and Vice Mayor Mark Allan Jay Yambao—bicker over who holds sway in Malabon.

Lina said they would immediately serve the order, which was signed by Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, so that Vicencio can reclaim his post and continue running the city's affairs.

He added that the order also directs Yambao to step down as acting mayor.

Yambao, on the other hand, welcomed the development, saying he is not clinging to the post and would step down as soon as the DILG order came in. At presstime, Yambao said he has yet to receive the copy of the order.

Vicencio had been ordered suspended for allegedly engaging in the anomalous purchase of land in Navotas.

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POSTER BOY
Posters of Bayani Fernando, chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and scourge of sidewalk vendors, dot the landscape of Boni Avenue in Mandaluyong City. The bills have been posted supposedly to announce an MMDA program to be aired on radio and television. JOAN BONDOC

Binay foe lands in prison for poll offense

ROBERTO Brillante, a former Makati councilor and long-time rival of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, yesterday was sentenced to one year imprisonment after he was found guilty of employing bodyguards during the 1995 election when he ran for mayor.

But the two bodyguards charged with the same offense were acquitted.

In a 16-page decision, Judge Winlove Dumayas of Branch 59 of the Makati Regional Trial Court said Brillante violated Section 261 of the Omnibus Election Code and disqualified him from running for public office again.

Acquitted were SPO1 Alexis Padernal and SPO3 Antonio Evangelista, who had been arrested along with Brillante on May 8, 1995, election day, after police received complaints that armed men were "meddling with and harassing" voters in the Barangay Bangkal precinct.

Police Inspector Napoleon Castro, the arresting officer, testified that ABS-CBN reporter Vivien Salvedia and her crew at the precinct had shown him the two Mitsubishi L-300 vans in which the armed men were riding.

Castro said he had stopped the vans and had found Brillante and two civilians in one van and Padernal, other civilians and "goons" in the other.

Police Chief Superintendent Rogelio Pureza of the Southern Police District testified that he had authorized security for Brillante who had filed a frustrated murder case against Binay.

In his testimony, Brillante said he hired bodyguards because his life was in danger and not because he was a candidate. He claimed that Binay's men were out to get him because he had exposed the mayor's anomalous multi-million peso transactions.

Brillante said that Binay had even ambushed him on Oct. 27, 1989 at the Cloverleaf exchange in Guadalupe Viejo.

A member of his staff, Armando Lumauag, was killed in the ambush, while another was seriously injured.

But Dumayas found Brillante's arguments weak and, quoting a similar decision by Judge Francisco Chavez, "beside the point."

Dumayas said in his ruling that it was "pretentious [for Brillante] to claim security had no relation to his candidacy" because Brillante was clearly making rounds concerning the elections at the time of his arrest.

As for Pureza's testimony, Dumayas said Brillante should have secured a permit/firearms ban exemption from the Commission of Elections.

Branch 59 clerks said Brillante's lawyers are expected to contest the decision and file an appeal soon. *Jamie Alarcon*

Woman cop accused of pyramid scam

By Agnes Donato

SWINDLING charges were filed yesterday against a police captain before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

Senior Insp. Proserfina Tadeos, of the Philippine National Police Engineering Service, was accused of engaging in a pyramid scam and issuing bouncing checks worth P2.36 million to 11 persons.

Tadeos is owner and operator of the YCorp Financial Services, which holds office at the ELI Building, on Santolan corner 6th Avenue, Murphy, Quezon City. It has another office in Taguig.

The complainants include Senior Supt. Dennis Daygo, Chief Insp. Nick Medillo, Insp. Radito Castro and Insp. John Maynard Andan.

Joaquin Garcia, Maria Susan Pascual, Ronnie Fuentes, Orlando Iglesia, Janice Caouitan, Fernando Frayre and Reynaldo Espartero de Leon Jr. also filed charges against Tadeos.

In the complaint, the PNP Anti-Fraud and Commercial Crimes Division said that Tadeos and her staff enticed the complainants to invest money in her company for a period of six months.

When the complainants issued the money, Tadeos reportedly gave them post-dated checks covering the six monthly interest payments and the amount that they invested.

But when the complainants presented the checks to the banks, the complainants were told that the account had been closed.

DoE: Oil firms to turn over part of fuel depot property to Manila

By Abigail Ho
and Jerome Aning

THE OIL companies operating in the Pandacan depot are planning a partial turnover of the linear park to the Manila City government as a possible solution to the depot problem, according to Energy Secretary Vincent Perez.

In a news briefing yesterday, Perez said he had met with oil giants Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Caltex Phils. last Monday and discussed a possible solution to the oil depot issue.

"What the oil firms had in mind was a partial turnover of the linear park (to Manila)," he said. "We hope to present this by Thursday or Friday."

City Ordinance 8027 provided for the reclassification of the oil depot's location into a commercial zone from an industrial zone. It took effect on April 30 with the expiration of the Memorandum of Understanding between City Hall and the oil firms.

To prevent total closure of the depot, the oil firms agreed to scale down operations at the facility and provide a "green" buffer zone between the oil tanks and the residential area.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza earlier said that the oil firms had failed to comply with these provisions of the agreement.

But Perez said the three oil firms had already dismantled 19 of the 28 tanks that they had agreed to dismantle by 2004. Operations of the depot would continue to be scaled down in the coming months.

"The most viable option is still a scale down. We're urging the oil firms to accelerate the removal of all other structures to make way for the linear park to be constructed there," he said.

A hearing among stakeholders will be held within the week to come up with a concrete solution to the issue.

Petron, Caltex and Shell are currently operating the Pandacan depot by virtue of special business permits granted by the Manila City Hall issued last week.

METROBRIEFS

Man dies in QC jail

QUEZON City jail inmate Randy Sultan died a day after public officials ordered a clean-up of the congested prison. Sultan, 19, of San Roque, Pag-asa, died of cardiac arrest. Police said that on Monday night, he complained of difficulty of breathing inside the Sigue-Sigue Sputnik cell. Sultan was taken to East Avenue Medical Center where he was proclaimed dead at 1 a.m. yesterday. Sultan was in jail on drug charges. The Quezon City Jail is the second most congested jail in Metro Manila following the Manila jail. There are already 2,304 inmates in QC jail, which only has the capacity to hold 700 persons. Cramped quarters have greatly contributed to the spread of tuberculosis, boils, diarrhea and skin allergies among inmates. *Anne Luisa Villarico*

Hurt for keeping the peace

UNABLE to sleep because of the noise his bickering next-door neighbors were making, Alejandro Ingua went out of his house and tried to pacify the quarreling couple in Barangay Pinagkaisahan, Makati City Monday night. But Inqua's attempt to keep the peace only made matters worse. Roberto Sulat, 23, who was then arguing with his wife, allegedly threw a beer bottle at Inqua, leaving a gaping wound on the victim's forehead. Inqua's neighbors alerted the authorities who hauled Sulat off to the Makati police station. *Jamie Alarcon*

Model SARS poster

CITY officials and residents have expressed gratitude to a top printing firm for its voluntary and effective contribution in the drive to prevent the spread of the SARS epidemic. Printwell, a globally competitive company, produced thousands of colorful posters, with the battlecry "Sa Mandaluyong, iwas SARS kami," that were posted all over the city. Civic leader Nandy Charvet, the man behind the campaign, said the poster had been made a model of the Department of Health.

Visayan festival in Manila

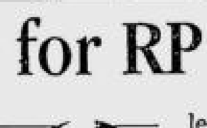
A POPULAR Visayan festival honoring San Isidro de Labrador, patron saint of farmers, will be held in Manila for the first time under the auspices of the Borongan Cathedral School - St. Joseph's College High School Class 1968 of Borongan, Eastern Samar. "San Isidro Ha Manila" will be held this May 10, 7 p.m. at the West Room of Kowloon Restaurant on West Avenue, Quezon City. Dinner tickets cost P200 each. For details, call Sandiganbayan spokesperson and lawyer Renato Bocar, a Class '68 alumnus, at 951-4587.

Peace awardees named

THE WORLD Peace Forum successfully held a dinner and prayer meeting on April 27 at the Manila Midtown Hotel. With the theme, "Healing the Wounds Within," the forum was organized by Dr. Josef de Ubaldo, DSc., national chancellor of the International Association of Educators for World Peace. The World Peace Forum culminated with a dinner and prayer for world peace attended by high school students belong to the "Peace I Like Movement" of JESUMARIAE headed by its president, Dr. Lily Rodrigo Canlas, Ph.D. During the candle lighting and prayer ceremony led by Dr. Carbonell, especial offering was done for the people and country of Iraq represented by its Ambassador Dr. Ghazi H. Hussein.

Terror tag on MILF good for RP

ON TARGET



Ramon Tulfo

IF THE PLAN by the United States to declare the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) an international terrorist group pushes through, Salamat Hashim might as well say goodbye to all the money and assets the MILF has stashed abroad.

MILF money and assets would be frozen in countries that are allies of the US government.

The Central Intelligence Agency has files of which liberation fronts have deposits in which banks in various countries.

* * *

If the MILF is declared a terrorist group, money and materiel will pour into the country to fight the Moro group.

The US and its allies might even send elite military units like the Navy Seals and Green Berets on top-secret missions to MILF-held areas to blow up Moro camps.

Let's face it: the country needs all the help that it can get to fight the Moros.

* * *

The MILF fighters can no longer seek asylum in Malaysia or Indonesia when things get hot for them in the country.

They will be arrested by the Malaysian or Indonesian police and sent back to the Philippines.

The government should lobby for declaring the MILF a terrorist group.

* * *

It seems only a matter of time before both houses of Congress approve the holding of a convention or a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution.

A constituent assembly is favored over the costly constitutional convention where delegates are elected by the people. If it's going to be a constituent assembly, Congress (the House and the Senate) will approve amendments by a vote of three-fourths of all its members.

* * *

Although they will lose their legislative identity, most members of the House and the Senate favor a change to a parliamentary form of government where the prime minister is the head of state.

A unicameral assembly-one house-is being proposed for a parliamentary form of government for the country.

This is better than the present setup where a bill has to be passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate before it becomes a law.

* * *

In many instances, bills that provide for the same law that are passed by both the Senate and the House do not match in contents.

It takes some time before the two differing versions of a bill are reconciled. The bicameral conference committee, which is composed of selected members of the Senate and the House, reconciles conflicting provisions of the same bill and even adds riders.

In that respect, the bicameral conference committee is more powerful than both the Senate and the House.

* * *

Why is the parliamentary form better than the present presidential form?

Given the temperament of the Filipinos to change the national leadership in midstream (i.e. Edsa 1 and Edsa 2), the parliamentary form is more suited to the country.

If the people lose confidence in the national leadership, they can ask their congressmen (or delegates or assemblymen) to change their prime minister.

That way, there will no longer be Edsa 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, etc.

The country will then no longer be ruled by a mob.

* * *

Ephraim Genuino, chairman and president of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), has incurred the ire of many casino habitues for his cost-cutting measures at the government-run gambling casinos.

Genuino has taken away the privilege of giving "on-the -house" lunch and dinners to politicians who frequent the casinos. Where before the sky was the limit for the food and liquor bills of these influential politicians, " now their food and booze consumption is limited to their person. They will now have to pay for the food of their bodyguards and hangers-on.

Genuino has also disallowed politicians and some casinos players from getting free rooms in hotels where there are casinos. They will have to play at the casino before they are given free rooms.

* * *

Genuino said he undertook cost-cutting measures because all the casinos are not earning much due to lack of players (read: gamblers).

Many big-time players who are mainland Chinese, Taiwanese and Koreans have not been coming to the casinos because of the SARS epidemic in their countries.

This is the first time that the casinos are not earning much, the top Pagcor official said.

* * *

If he didn't cut costs at the casinos, Genuino said, he would have to dismiss services of many casino employees.

"I'd rather some players got angry with me than let go of Pagcor employees whose families would go hungry if they became jobless," said Genuino.

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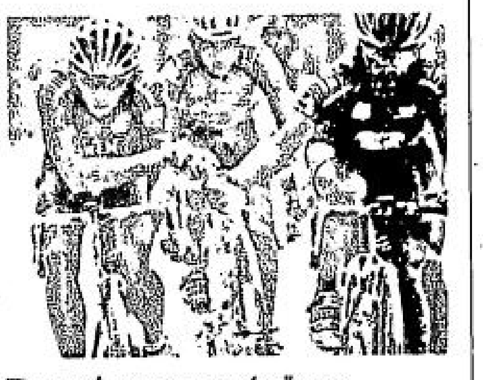


Domingo snatches Tour leadership /A26

Kings trample Mavs; Pistons whip 76ers /A26

Gutierrez, Superal prevail in Jungolf tilt A27

RP pug battles Thai /A27

POC boosts PBA drug fight

Sports body joins worldwide anti-doping drive

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball Association yesterday received strong backing in its fight against the use of banned drugs in the local pro league.

The boost came with the announcement by the Philippine Olympic Committee that it has joined the worldwide anti-doping campaign to curb the use of prohibited drugs among athletes.

POC president Celso Dayrit, who made the move at the height of the PBA drive to rid its ranks of drug offenders, said the POC executive board has approved its participation and signing of the World Anti-Doping Code.

"As the national olympic committee in the Philippines, it is our role to lead the fight against doping in sports, as using prohibited drugs and substance constitute violations of sport and of medical ethics, and the practice is also contrary to the fundamental principles of the Olympic movement," explained Dayrit.

PBA Commissioner Noli Eala, according to league technical director Perry Martinez, said the pro league welcomes the POC move as it will definitely boost its campaign against drug offenders.

"Great, *maganda ito*, we have to join hands with other associations in this drive," Martinez told the INQUIRER.

DAYRIT

The POC has agreed to join the campaign initiated by the Swiss-based World Anti-Doping Agency (Wada) in coordination with the International Olympic Committee.

As a signatory to the Code, the POC undertakes to promote awareness of the negative effects of doping through all its member national sports associations.

POC medical Commission chair Dr. Raul Canlas explains that pre-competition testing may be conducted on any athlete while in training and, as may be warranted, Wada could send a representative to conduct random testing on athletes preparing to compete in the Olympic Games and any other international competitions.

The PBA has been fielding its players in the Asian Games since 1990.

EALA

While the Code particularly focuses on the use of performance enhancing substances, it also prohibits the use of banned drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, and shabu.

Based on laboratory findings, marijuana and shabu were the two substances distinctly found in urine samples of PBA cagers who had tested positive for drugs.

Commissioner Eala earlier said the PBA "should be commended, not condemned" for trying to police its ranks and coming up with a few guilty drug offenders.

He said the Associated Press even talked to him Tuesday morning because an Australian-based sports organization wanted to use the PBA as a model for all sports organizations in the world.

Eala, others to take test

IN THE SPIRIT of fairness, all PBA officials will undergo drug testing next week–starting with PBA commissioner Noli Eala.

Eala yesterday said the decision was in line with efforts to make the commissioner's office come clean once it starts seriously cracking down on drug offenders in the league.

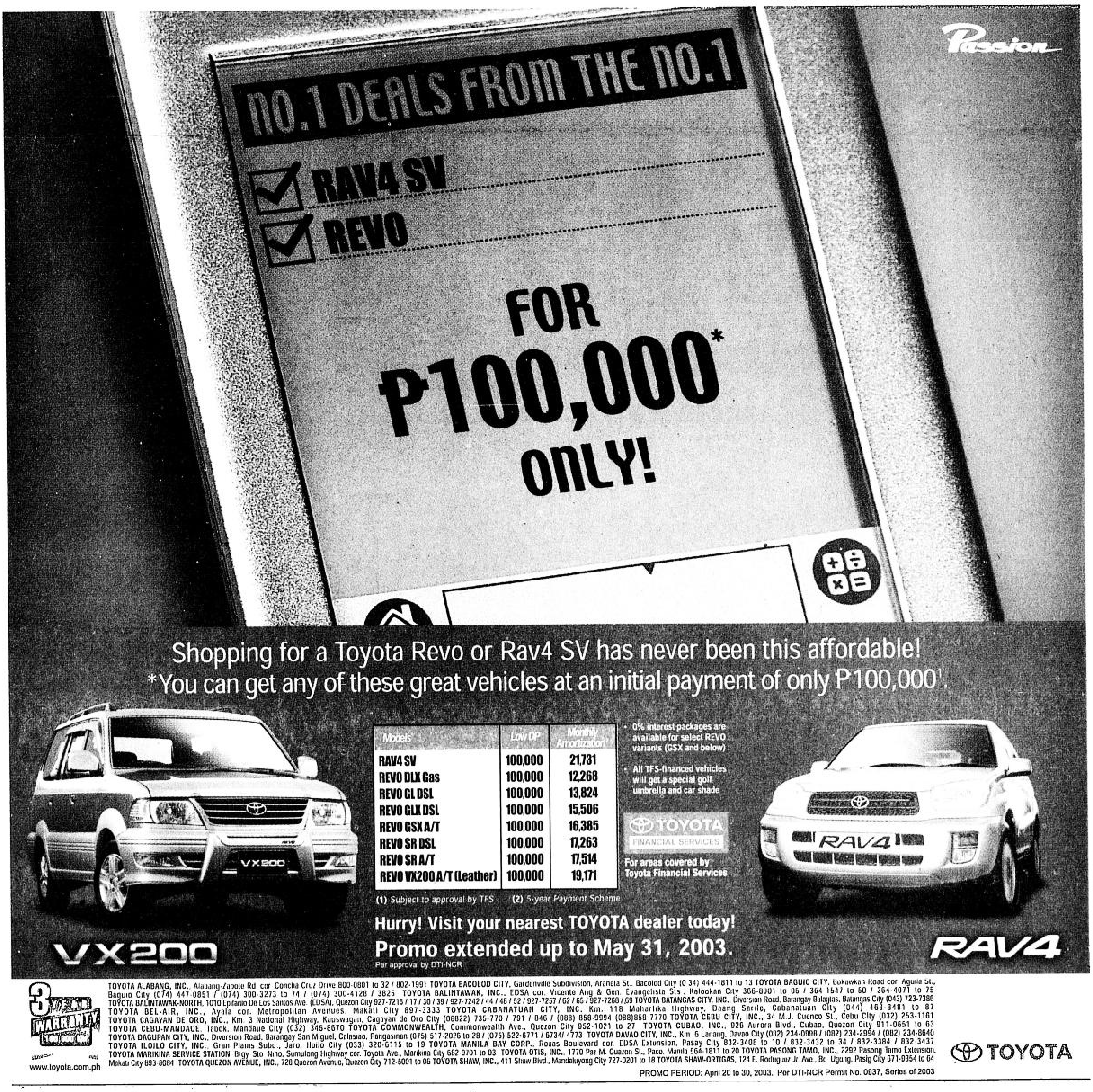
The drug test will cover just about everybody in the league, including the 35 members of the Office of the Commissioner and 50 referees, table officials, statisticians, ushers and usherettes.

The massive testing will usher in the mandatory drug check on all players which will be done on a per team basis.

"So that nobody will accuse us of being unfair when we subject everybody in the league to drug testing, I will undergo the test myself along with my staff," said Eala. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Viva vs Montaña

VIVA Mineral Water and Montaña Pawnshop play their once-postponed game at 3 p.m. today, with the winner claiming an outright semifinal berth in the Sunkist PBL Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.



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REVO GL DSL	100,000	13,824
REVO GLX DSL	100,000	15,506
REVO GSX A/T	100,000	16,385
REVO SR DSL	100,000	17,263
REVO SR A/T	100,000	17,514
REVO VX200 A/T (Leather)	100,000	19,171

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PROMO PERIOD: April 20 to 30, 2003. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0037, Series of 2003

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NBA PLAYOFFS 2003

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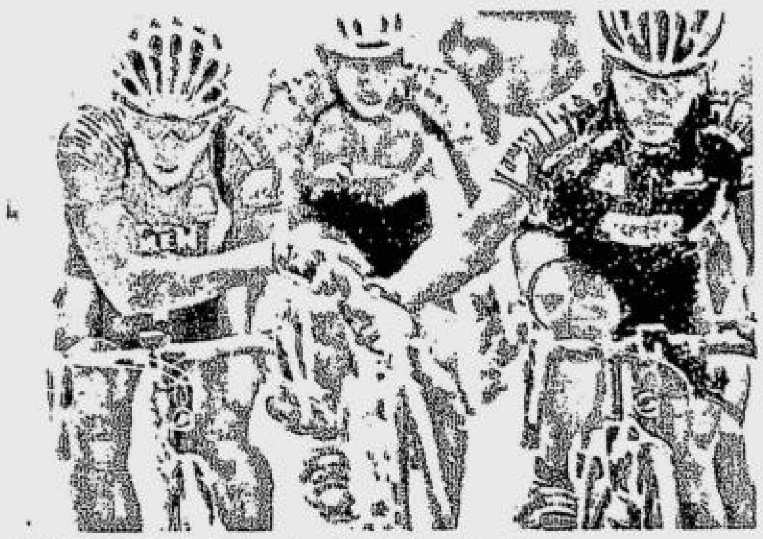

FELICIANO (right) extends a helping hand to Domingo. VAL HANDUMON

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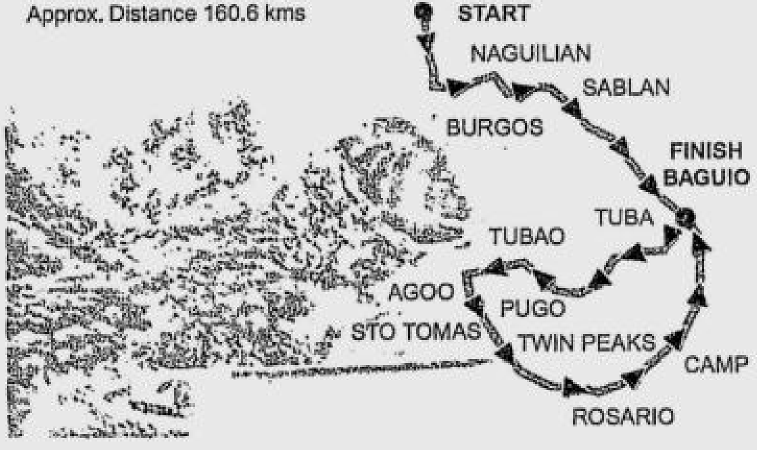

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RPN-9 Big Boss writes

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THE UNVISITED pigeonhole yielded this:

"Dear Mr. Mendoza:

"This is to thank you most sincerely for calling my attention to the inexcusable operational lapse during the live broadcast of the U.S. Masters golf tournament last Monday, April 14

"In this connection, allow me to extend my most profound apologies to you and all those who have been frustrated by the coverage.

"I would like to assure you and the legion of golfers out there that I was frustrated as you all were during the broadcast so much so that I severely reprimanded all concerned.

"Allow me to assure you that RPN-9 will henceforth be more careful in the handling of live coverages of important events, sports or otherwise. The network, which has been in hibernation for sometime, is now on the threshold of regeneration.

"We are launching a lot of new exciting programs immediately after Easter. We are also lining up a lot of other special events coverages to include the Ms Universe beauty pageant and other world sports championships.

"Please give us another chance to be of service.

"Again, thank you so much for your concern. May the risen Lord bless all of us with further opportunities for renewal.

"With my highest esteem and warmest fraternal regards.

"Very truly yours,
(SGD.) Cerge M. Remonde,
Chairman & CEO
Radio Philippines Network, Inc. (RPN)'

***

I don't know what to say. I am out of words to describe my feelings.

First, the letter should have been published here immediately. My apologies. Lesson: check your mail as often as possible. You may not know it but you could already be the recipient of a house and lot from a grocery promotion.

Second, the letter really floored me. Why, it was oozing with humility. To think that it came from the highest official of RPN-9 no less, what more can you ask for? Any of Mr. Remonde's subalterns could have done it and I would not have minded it. But no, the Big Boss did it himself! Here's a glass to that.

If other officials, particularly those from the government, would follow the example of Mr. Remonde, I think this country is going to go places sooner than expected, Abu Sayyaf or no Abu Sayyaf.

A quick flashback of the issue at hand: The last US Masters was being aired by RPN-9 when it got cut during the thrilling playoff between Len Mattiace and Mike Weir. (Weir went on to win it.) It broke the hearts of many, especially those who woke up at 4 a.m. (like me) only to see it abruptly killed from the TV screen at 7 a.m. to give way to a new show. If this were America, RPN-9 could have been flooded with lawsuits.

Oh, well, thank God this is the Philippines.

And, yes, only in the Philippines.

Still and all, I raise another glass to Mr. Remonde.

There is always that distinct feeling each time a big shot like Mr. Remonde responds to a call. Or a plaint. It makes you feel special. Gives you that pleasure that comes only once in a blue moon - the pleasure of being recognized by someone who is up there, almost unreachable as Ninoy's "unreachable star."

Hope you don't change one bit, sir?

And yes, I'm looking forward to your Ms Universe pageant show. And hope that it not be cut, particularly when the bikini show portion is finally on.

Overall Standings

RANK	RIDER		TEAM	TIME
1	ENRIQUE	DOMINGO	POS	40h43'04.914
2	ARNEL	QUIRIMIT	TAN	00h02'09.876
3	MERCULIO	RAMOS	SAM	00h02'53.018
4	RHYAN	TANGUILIG	PAG	00h03'23.209
5	WARREN	DAVADILLA	INT	00h04'10.758
6	SANTI	BARNACHEA	BOW	00h10'31.779
7	BERNARD	LUZON	PAT	00h11'10.057
8	LLOYD	REYNANTE	PAG	00h12'57.278
9	RENATO	DOLOSA	GIL	00h16'16.769
10	ALFIE	CATALAN	BOW	00h16'26.748
11	JOSEPH	MILLANES	TAN	00h16'27.469
12	RONALD	GORRANTES	ECO	00h18'15.638
13	FELIX	CELESTE	VAT	00h18'54.302
14	FREDERICK	FELICIANO	DRU	00h20'40.629
15	ALBERT	PRIMERO	PLD	00h24'54.630
16	ARNOLD	MARCELO	POS	00h27'58.281
17	FERNANDO	ALAGANO	INT	00h31'59.088
18	CARLO	JAZUL	ECO	00h32'43.010
19	DANNY	GANIGAN	SAM	00h33'16.153
20	PLACIDO	VALDEZ	DRU	00h41'04.078

11TH LAP STANDINGS

1	FREDERICK	FELICIANO	DRU	05h02'15.090
2	BERNARD	LUZON	PAT	00h00'03.72
3	PATERNO	CURTAN	ECO	same

RANK	RIDER		TEAM	TIME
4	CARLO	JAZUL	ECO	same
5	RENATO	DOLOSA	GIL	same
6	SHERWIN	CARERA	POS	same
7	DANNY	GANIGAN	SAM	same
8	JOEL	CALDERON	VAT	same
9	WARREN	DAVADILLA	INT	same
10	SANTI	BARNACHEA	BOW	same

TEAM STANDINGS

PL	TEAM	TIMED	DEFICIT
1	INTEL	164h13'24.9	
2	POSTMEN	164h32'24.3	00h18'59.35
3	TANDUAY RHUM RIDERS	164h50'26.4	00h37'01.46
4	SAMSUNG	165h05'47.1	00h52'22.20
5	ECO SAVERS	165h21'42.7	01h08'17.81
6	PATROL 117	165h28'25.4	01h15'00.54
7	BOWLING GOLD	165h47'55.2	01h34'30.24
8	VAT RIDERS	165h58'50.7	01h45'25.82
9	PAGCORSPORTS	166h00'12.9	01h46'47.95
10	GILBEYS ISLAND PUNCH	166h54'57.7	02h41'32.77
11	DRUG BUSTERS	167h27'21.9	03h13'56.97
12	PLDT-NDD	168h12'31.5	03h59'06.63

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: Celtics vs Nets, Game 2; 7 a.m. (r - 7 p.m.); IBC 13 - The Atlantic Division rivals face each other in the playoffs for the second straight year.

Lakers vs Spurs, Game 2; 9:30 a.m. (r - 10 p.m.); Solar Sports - San Antonio continued their mastery over LA in Game One, but Shaq and Kobe will conspire to finally end the streak.

TENNIS: Telecom Italia Masters; 12 noon, 2 p.m., 8 p.m. and midnight; Star Sports - Second and third round action resumes in Italy.

GOLF: Inside the PGA Tour: 4:30 p.m., Star Sports - All the latest happenings in the PGA are featured in this half hour program

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AFP

DALLAS
44
SACRAMENTO

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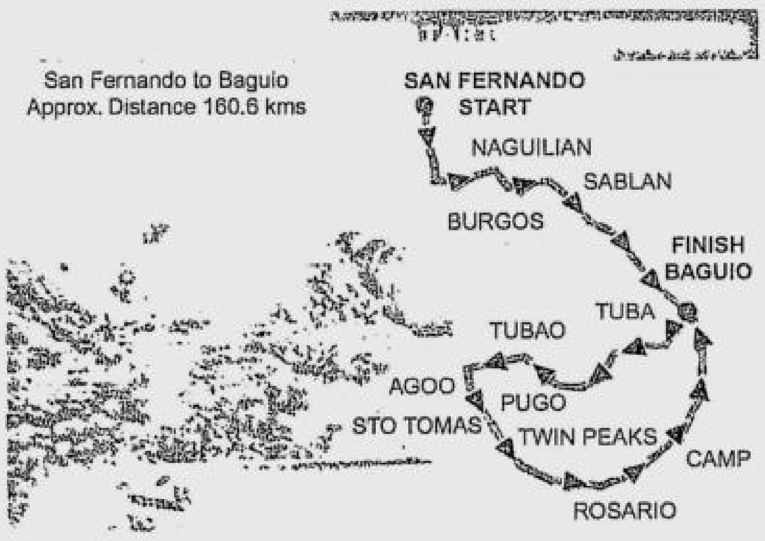

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THE UNVISITED pigeonhole yielded this:

"Dear Mr. Mendoza:

"This is to thank you most sincerely for calling my attention to the inexcusable operational lapse during the live broadcast of the U.S. Masters golf tournament last Monday, April 14

"In this connection, allow me to extend my most profound apologies to you and all those who have been frustrated by the coverage.

"I would like to assure you and the legion of golfers out there that I was frustrated as you all were during the broadcast so much so that I severely reprimanded all concerned.

"Allow me to assure you that RPN-9 will henceforth be more careful in the handling of live coverages of important events, sports or otherwise. The network, which has been in hibernation for sometime, is now on the threshold of regeneration.

"We are launching a lot of new exciting programs immediately after Easter. We are also lining up a lot of other special events coverages to include the Ms Universe beauty pageant and other world sports championships.

"Please give us another chance to be of service.

"Again, thank you so much for your concern. May the risen Lord bless all of us with further opportunities for renewal.

"With my highest esteem and warmest fraternal regards.

"Very truly yours,

(SGD.) Cerge M. Remonde,
Chairman & CEO
Radio Philippines Network, Inc. (RPN)'

***

I don't know what to say. I am out of words to describe my feelings.

First, the letter should have been published here immediately. My apologies. Lesson: check your mail as often as possible. You may not know it but you could already be the recipient of a house and lot from a grocery promotion.

Second, the letter really floored me. Why, it was oozing with humility. To think that it came from the highest official of RPN-9 no less, what more can you ask for? Any of Mr. Remonde's subalterns could have done it and I would not have minded it. But no, the Big Boss did it himself! Here's a glass to that.

If other officials, particularly those from the government, would follow the example of Mr. Remonde, I think this country is going to go places sooner than expected, Abu Sayyaf or no Abu Sayyaf.

A quick flashback of the issue at hand: The last US Masters was being aired by RPN-9 when it got cut during the thrilling playoff between Len Mattiace and Mike Weir. (Weir went on to win it.) It broke the hearts of many, especially those who woke up at 4 a.m. (like me) only to see it abruptly killed from the TV screen at 7 a.m. to give way to a new show. If this were America, RPN-9 could have been flooded with lawsuits.

Oh, well, thank God this is the Philippines.

And, yes, only in the Philippines.

Still and all, I raise another glass to Mr. Remonde.

There is always that distinct feeling each time a big shot like Mr. Remonde responds to a call. Or a plaint. It makes you feel special. Gives you that pleasure that comes only once in a blue moon - the pleasure of being recognized by someone who is up there, almost unreachable as Ninoy's "unreachable star."

Hope you don't change one bit, sir?

And yes, I'm looking forward to your Ms Universe pageant show. And hope that it not be cut, particularly when the bikini show portion is finally on.

Overall Standings

RANK	RIDER		TEAM	TIME
1	ENRIQUE	DOMINGO	POS	40h43'04.914
2	ARNEL	QUIRIMIT	TAN	00h02'09.876
3	MERCULIO	RAMOS	SAM	00h02'53.018
4	RHYAN	TANGUILIG	PAG	00h03'23.209
5	WARREN	DAVADILLA	INT	00h04'10.758
6	SANTI	BARNACHEA	BOW	00h10'31.779
7	BERNARD	LUZON	PAT	00h11'10 057
8	LLOYD	REYNANTE	PAG	00h12'57.278
9	RENATO	DOLOSA	GIL	00h16'16.769
10	ALFIE	CATALAN	BOW	00h16'26.748
11	JOSEPH	MILLANES	TAN	00h16'27.469
12	RONALD	GORRANTES	ECO	00h18'15.638
13	FELIX	CELESTE	VAT	00h18'54.302
14	FREDERICK	FELICIANO	DRU	00h20'40.629
15	ALBERT	PRIMERO	PLD	00h24'54.630
16	ARNOLD	MARCELO	POS	00h27'58.281
17	FERNANDO	ALAGANO	INT	00h31'59.088
18	CARLO	JAZUL	ECO	00h32'43.010
19	DANNY	GANIGAN	SAM	00h33'16.153
20	PLACIDO	VALDEZ	DRU	00h41'04.078

11TH LAP STANDINGS

1	FREDERICK	FELICIANO	DRU	05h02'15.090
2	BERNARD	LUZON	PAT	00h00'03.72
3	PATERNO	CURTAN	ECO	same

RANK	RIDER		TEAM	TIME
4	CARLO	JAZUL	ECO	same
5	RENATO	DOLOSA	GIL	same
6	SHERWIN	CARERA	POS	same
7	DANNY	GANIGAN	SAM	same
8	JOEL	CALDERON	VAT	same
9	WARREN	DAVADILLA	INT	same
10	SANTI	BARNACHEA	BOW	same

TEAM STANDINGS

PL	TEAM	TIMED	DEFICIT
1	INTEL	164h13'24.9	
2	POSTMEN	164h32'24.3	00h18'59.35
3	TANDUAY RHUM RIDERS	164h50'26.4	00h37'01.46
4	SAMSUNG	165h05'47.1	00h52'22.20
5	ECO SAVERS	165h21'42.7	01h08'17.81
6	PATROL 117	165h28'25.4	01h15'00.54
7	BOWLING GOLD	165h47'55.2	01h34'30.24
8	VAT RIDERS	165h58'50.7	01h45'25.82
9	PAGCORSPORTS	166h00'12.9	01h46'47.95
10	GILBEYS ISLAND PUNCH	166h54'57.7	02h41'32.77
11	DRUG BUSTERS	167h27'21.9	03h13'56 97
12	PLDT-NDD	168h12'31.5	03h59'06.63

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: Celtics vs Nets, Game 2; 7 a.m. (r - 7 p.m.); IBC 13 - The Atlantic Division rivals face each other in the playoffs for the second straight year.

Lakers vs Spurs, Game 2; 9:30 a.m. (r - 10 p.m.): Solar Sports - San Antonio continued their mastery over LA in Game One, but Shaq and Kobe will conspire to finally end the streak.

TENNIS: Telecom Italia Masters; 12 noon, 2 p.m., 8 p.m. and midnight; Star Sports - Second and third round action resumes in Italy.

GOLF: Inside the PGA Tour: 4:30 p.m., Star Sports - All the latest happenings in the PGA are featured in this half hour program

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Gutierrez, Superal top Jungolf tourney

By Jong Arcano

IN a circuit where Wolen Juan Superal has kept everybody busy counting his sub-par rounds, IG Gutierrez finally enjoyed his day in the sun yesterday.

Gutierrez joined the winners' circle after five unsuccessful tries when he hacked out a five-stroke victory with his second straight even-par round of 72 in Class B of the Samsung Jungolf Tour at the Sherwood Hills course in Trece Martires, Cavite.

Gutierrez became the sixth new winner in the tightly contested Class B (13-14 years) division, besting Allan Guy (76-226) and Eagle Ridge leg winner Miko Yee (75-230) for the top plum with his 220 aggregate for 54 holes.

The Superal Show continued with Wolen Juan again firing three successive sub-par rounds to win in runaway fashion.

His four-under 68 yesterday was his sixth in a row, eighth in his last nine and ninth in 10 rounds as he sustained his assault of the record books.

Sang Youl Eom, president of Samsung Philippines, and Jungolf president Gerry Handog handed out the trophies and other special prizes to the winners.

The other major sponsors of the event are Philippine Airlines, Airlift Asia, Exito Mfg., Global Lighting and Air Liquide, Phils. Pisanti Golf, Bellevue Manila, Third World Eximport, HBW Enterprises, MCCI Corp. and BF Technology are minor sponsors.

The 2nd round results:

Class A: Boys (J. Tambunting 74-227, A. Dimabuyo 79-235, T. Macatangay 81-235)

Class B: Boys (IG Gutierrez 72-220, A. Guy 76-226, M. Yee 75-230) Girls (L. de Villa 84-253, B. dela Paz 88-266, M. Unson 115-354)

Class C: Boys (J. Abdon 75-229, C. Tinio III 87-259, M. Arevalo 85-268) Girls (C. Superal 74-230, D. de Villa 78-236, C. Rodriguez 85-261)

Class D: Boys (W. Superal 68-208, C. Ricohermoso 78-238, M. Pizarro 80-243, M. Manaig 80-249, M. Puyat 81-250) Girls (D. Ardina 83-240, K. dela Cruz 92-280, A. Datingaling 90-287, A. de Villa 104-301)

Class E: Boys (B. dela Paz 80-248, JP de Claro 81-258, AR Ramos 92-263, T. Arevalo, 85-264, M. Yee 89-274) Girls (K. Potenciano 91-273, A. Unson 93-286, M. Monsalve 109-316, F. Medalla 115-340)

RP pug vs Thai

REVENGE will be foremost on Randy Mangubat's mind when he challenges World Boxing Council flyweight champion Pongsaklek Wonjongkam in Songkla, Thailand on June 6.

The Thai has convincingly beaten the Filipino twice, but Mangubat believes that with the proper training charted by his trainer, former two-time world flyweight titlist Erbito Salavarria, he'll be able to put one over Wonjongkam. Fact is, the 27-year-old Mangubat has left his wife and their two-year-old daughter to concentrate on his fight against Wonjongkam.

Rey Danseco

SPORTSWATCH

Seasportsfest at Baywalk

ATIENZA

A BIG crowd is expected at the Roxas Bouvelard Baywalk on Sunday for the Manila Summer Seasports Festival to be staged at the Manila Bay. Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Manila Sports Council (Masco) chair Ali Atienza yesterday announced it's all system go for colorful summer event. Now on its second year, the festival will feature dragon boat, canoe and kayak races, as well as races for various types of sailboats, like optimist sailboats, for competitors aged 5 to 15, and 420, 470, laser and streaker sailboats for competitors 16 years old and above. Spectators at the newly redeveloped Roxas Boulevard seawall could also enjoy a beach volleyball tournament, to be held on the south side of the Baywalk.

Greenmeadows golfers shine

GREENMEADOWS tallied 292 points to rule the first round of the Nokia Intervillage Central golf tournament at the Aoki course of the Eagle Ridge golf complex in Cavite Monday. JP Reyes, a 5-handicapper, produced the day's only 40-point effort under the Stableford scoring system as the Greenmeadows golfers pounced on their fancied rivals' poor start to lead the series among villages in Makati, Quezon City and Mandaluyong. They posted a six-point lead over Bel-Air, which had a 286, as the highly touted Magallanes played just well enough to secure third place with a 270 in the event sponsored by Nokia. The rest of the seven-team field struggled under difficult playing conditions and will have to dish out superb games in the next round to snatch one of the three semifinal berths staked in this prestigious golf event backed by Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), Alaxan, Pisanti golf wear, 357 Boracay and BJ Marthel International.

San Beda benefit golf tomorrow

THE SAN Beda high school class of 1967 is sponsoring an invitational golf tournament on May 9 at the Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club. Former Manila Rep. Ramon "Dondon" Bagatsing said the tournament will be for the benefit of the San Beda College expansion program. "This is class '67's humble contribution to the ambitious and noteworthy expansion program which our alma mater is currently undertaking. Our batch has pledged to help put up a classroom worth about P250,000, on top of scholarship programs which we have supported," said Bagatsing. The tournament will tee off at 7 a.m. in shotgun fashion. For particulars, call 812-6645, 890-6337 to 38 and 631-3135.

Running clinic at Rockwell Center

A ONE-DAY running clinic will be held this Sunday, May 11, at the Rockwell Center grounds in preparation for the New Balance 25K Power Race which will also start and finish at the Rockwell Center. The clinic will be handled by Jay Sales, the varsity track team coach of the University of the Philippines and former assistant coach of the national triathlon team. This was announced recently by event director Nino Sinco of the organizing Alternative Events Group which is supervising the New Balance 25K Power race scheduled on May 25. The clinic will start at 6 a.m. at the tennis court open parking lot. Powerade, the official energy drink of the race, and Powerbar will provide free product samples to all the clinic participants. Other corporate supporters of the event include the Rockwell Club, Enervon, Cebuana Lhuillier, Polar Heart Rate Monitor, Adobo Republic, David's Salon, PRU Life UK, Milo, S-mints, M-Tech Medical Services, Stresscape Massage Center, 103.5 K-Lite, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9 and 105.1 Crossover.

Danding heads derby finalists

COJUANGCO

THE 10th "Ucap Guts and Glory LCC Leonard 7-Cock Derby" Championship round gets going tonight at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. Sponsors are Sagupaan B-50 Forten (anti-stress), Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo and Lakpue Drug's Washout Shampoo. Currently leading, with three wins each, are former ambassador Danding Cojuangco (Bumble Bee Balbina), OPMI president Vic Yu (King Boxer II) and LCC Leonard (Louie Cua). With two points are Palawan sportsman Mauro Prieto (Anito), Jet Fernando (JSF-GP 1), Eric dela Rosa (Pasay Anniversary July 15, 17 and 19), Vice Gov. Espinosa (Sir Arthur), Alex Tang of Bicol (G and G Ente Farm), John Capinpin/Madlambayan Brothers (J-Cap Mad RBA 1), V. Yu (King Boxer 1) and L Cua (LCC Leonard 1). For other details, call 531-4003, 531-4005, 535-2341, and 534-4110.

'Balikatan' meet resumes today

ACTION in the "Balikatan 5-Cock Derby" resumes with the second round eliminations today at Roligon Mega Cockpit. A total of 109 participants are seeing action. The derby, sponsored by Thunderbird Platinum, Pagcor Casino Filipino and Ninja Gamefowl Feeds, starts at 5:30 p.m. A total of 115 entries competed last Tuesday, said derby host Rolly Ligon. Ligon is being backed up by general manager Danny Ty and Roming Vergara. Leading the two pointers last Tuesday were racing commissioner Jun Sevilla, Gino Teodoro, Jumbo Delgado and Dong Lacson. At stake in this derby is a whopping guaranteed prize of P1.2 million. For details, call 833-2275 and 833-1638.

Corinthian, Ayala cagers advance

CORINTHIAN Gardens and Ayala Alabang Village subdued Bel-Air Village and Merville, respectively, in overtime victories last weekend to grab final slots in the Nike Battlegrounds tournament. Corinthian Gardens beat Bel-Air, 102-97, in two overtimes, while Bel-Air downed Merville, 95-81. The trio of Anthony How, Johar Disomimba, and Henry Inductivo combined for a total of 16 points in the second overtime period to finally stop Bel-Air. Ayala Alabang, on the other hand, relied on the late game heroics of Mark Reyes, who drilled in eight of his 11 points in at crunchtime. The final game will be held at 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 10, at the Phelps Dodge Gym in Mandaluyong City.

Carlos Filart paintings on games

SPORTS and unforgettable childhood games get a magical treatment in the colorful paintings of the acclaimed artist Carlos D. Filart who will mount his second one-man show at the Ayala Museum in Makati at 6 p.m. today. Guests of honor are Carlos Augusto Loureiro de Calvalho of the Brazilian Embassy, Mesdames Josefina Dimatulac and Azucena C. Uranza.

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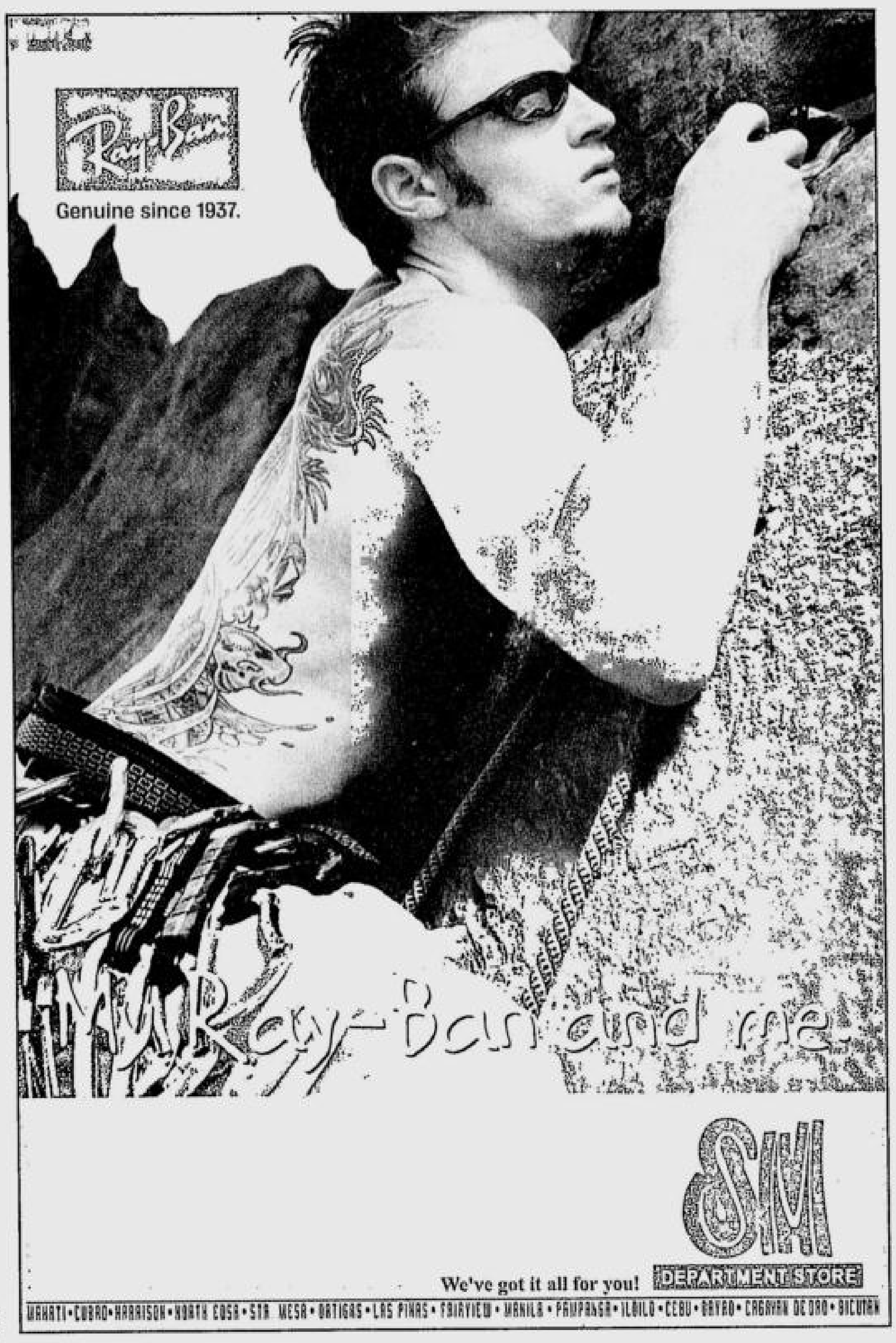
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DR. JOSE RAUL CANLAS, Doctor of Sports Medicine and Orthopedic Surgery, Section Chief for Sports Medicine in St. Luke's Medical Center. He was head of the medical team for the last Olympic and Asian games, and is Team Physician for Philippine delegations and other sports teams.

VIVIAN ZAPANTA certified fitness instructor of Asian Development Bank and San Miguel Corporation, as well as personal trainer of prominent personalities. She has lectured on fitness and health to organizations, private corporations and universities.

CORY QUIRINO, TV host of the longest-running lifestyle magazine show in the Philippines, wellness columnist, and author. She has also given lectures on total wellness.

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2 TILL THERE WAS YOU	2 25TH HOUR	2 X-MEN 2 12:05, 2:55, 5:45, 8:35	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 X-MEN 2 1:30, 4:25, 7:20, 10:15	2 BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
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	5 JOHNNY ENGLISH		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 X-MEN 2 2:45 5:40 8:35 11:30	5 TILL THERE WAS YOU
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2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DOLBY)	JOHNNY ENGLISH
4	

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	XEREX
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DOLBY)	KANGAROO JACK
4	X-MEN-2

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (DOLBY)	X-MEN-2
2 (DTS)	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	XEREX

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	BAYARAN
2	BOLDD STAR
3 (DTS)	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	X-MEN-2

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	A MAN APART
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DTS)	X-MEN-2
4	BAYARAN
5	NATIONAL SECURITY

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	BAYARAN
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	X-MEN-2

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	X-MEN-2
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	BAYARAN

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	JOHNNY ENGLISH
2	XEREX
3 (DTS)	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	X-MEN-2

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2	RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	BOLD STAR
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	XEREX
2	X-MEN-2
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	JOHNNY ENGLISH

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	EQUILIBRIUM
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3 (DTS ES)	X-MEN-2
4	XEREX

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121

1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
2	A MAN APART
3 (DOLBY)	PHONE BOOTH
4	X-MEN-2

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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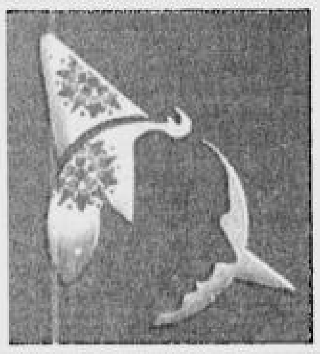
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang

Tel. 85035-71 to 72



PINOCCHIO

NOW SHOWING

SM CINEMA
SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 833-9999
NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173868

1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
2	XEREX
3	X-MEN 2
4	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
5	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
6	TILL THERE WAS YOU
7	BAYARAN
8	JOHNNY ENGLISH

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416

1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
2	JOHNNY ENGLISH
3	X-MEN 2
4	XEREX
5	X-MEN 2
6	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
7	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
8	SOULKEEPER
9	BAYARAN
10	TILL THERE WAS YOU

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	ANGER MANAGEMENT
2	JOHNNY ENGLISH
3	EQUILIBRIUM
4	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
5	A MAN APART
6	BAYARAN
7	X-MEN 2
8	TILL THERE WAS YOU
9	X-MEN 2
10	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
11	XEREX
12	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
2	JOHNNY ENGLISH
3	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
4	X-MEN 2
5	SOULKEEPER
6	X-MEN 2
7	BAYARAN
8	PINOCCHIO
9	TILL THERE WAS YOU
10	A MAN APART
11	XEREX
12	TILL THERE WAS YOU

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	X-MEN 2
2	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
3	X-MEN 2
4	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
5	PINOCCHIO
6	ANGER MANAGEMENT
7	BAYARAN
8	EQUILIBRIUM
9	TILL THERE WAS YOU
10	JOHNNY ENGLISH
11	SOULKEEPER
12	XEREX

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	NPINOCCHIO
2	X-MEN 2
3	XEREX
4	TILL THERE WAS YOU
5	BAYARAN
6	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
7	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
8	X-MEN 2

SM SOUTHMALL
8066868

1	PINOCCHIO
2	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
3	X-MEN 2
4	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
5	TILL THERE WAS YOU
6	SOULKEEPER
7	TILL THERE WAS YOU
8	X-MEN 2
9	XEREX
10	BAYARAN

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	X-MEN 2
2	SOLARIS
3	ANGER MANAGEMENT
4	JAILBIRDS
5	XEREX
6	BAYARAN
7	TILL THERE WAS YOU
8	X-MEN 2

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	JAILBIRDS
2	CLOSED
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	KANGAROO JACK
5	X-MEN 2
6	ANGER MANAGEMENT
7	CLOSED
8	BAYARAN

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	X-MEN 2
2	A MAN APART
3	RING 2
4	BAYARAN
5	PHONE BOOTH
6	TILL THERE WAS YOU

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1	BAYARAN
2	X-MEN 2
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	X-MEN 2
2	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND
3	TILL THERE WAS YOU
4	BAYARAN

SM CITY DAVAO
2976999

1	X-MEN 2
2	JAILBIRDS
3	WISHMASTER 4
4	TILL THERE WAS YOU
5	ANGER MANAGEMENT
6	KANGAROO JACK

SM BICUTAN
776-3055

1	X-MEN 2
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	BAYARAN
4	X-MEN 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884

1	SOLARIS
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	ANGER MANAGEMENT
4	X-MEN 2

THE PODIUM CINEMA
18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City
633-8976

1	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE 11:40 FS/12:10 MF/2:20/4:30/6:40/8:50/ 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:40 END
2	X2: X-MEN UNITED 11:10 FS/11:40 MF/2:30/5:20/8:10/ 10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:20 END

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633-7641 loc. 279

THX	X-MEN2 12:30 LMF,3:30, 6:30, 9:30 LMF, 11:50 END
2	X-MEN2
3	BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
4	PINOCCHIO
5	TILL THERE WAS YOU
6	CONFESSIONS DANGEROUS MIND
7	SOUL KEEPER
8	BAYARAN
9	XEREX
10	JOHNY ENGLISH

MATINEE PRICE: P90 THX cinema P75 Tlevel cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am- 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita
536-7809-12

1	X-MEN 2
2	SOUL KEEPER
3	BAYARAN
4	BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
5	PINOCCHIO
6	TILL THERE WAS YOU
7	CONFESSIONS DANGEROUD MIND

Metro East - Marcos hway
682-8193 / 8280

1	BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
2	X-MEN 2
3	XEREX
4	CONFESSIONS DANGEROUS MIND
5	X-MEN 2
6	TILL THERE WAS YOU
7	JOHNY ENGLISH
8	BAYARAN

Novaliches
935-3229-30

1	X- MEN 2
2	BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
3	XEREX
4	CONFESSIONS DANEROUS MIND
5	TILL THERE WAS YOU
6	JOHNY ENGLISH
7	ANGER MANAGEMENT
8	BAYARAN

Malabon Itisquare
288-0985 / 288-2575

1	XEREX
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	X-MEN 2
4	BAYARAN

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp
(045)875-1927
(045)961-5270

1	X-MEN2
2	PHONE BOOTH
3	BAYARAN
4	TILL THERE WAS YOU
5	RING 2
6	A MAN APART

Imus
471-8188 / 875-3838

1	X-MEN 2
2	BRINGGING DOWN THE HOUSE
3	BAYARAN
4	CONFESSIONS DANGEROUS MIND
5	TILL THERE WAS YOU
6	XEREX

Sta. Rosa Laguna
(049)837-0907

1	X- MEN 2
2	A MAN APART
3	BAYARAN
4	TILL THERE WAS YOU
5	XEREX

Bacolod
441-0453 / 0459

1	X-MEN 2
2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
3	XEREX
4	ANGER MANAGEMENT
5	KANGAROO JACK
6	SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE

Iloilo
336-8077-78

1	X-MEN2
2	ANGER MANAGEMENT
3	KANGAROO JACK
4	TILL THERE WAS YOU
5	BAYARAN
6	JAIL BIRDS

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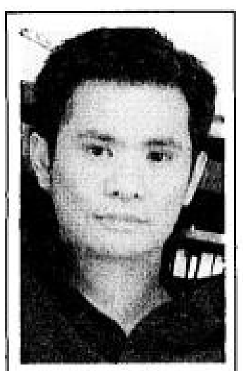
SHOW TIME

Boy A in hot new show

TV HOST Boy Abunda takes on controversial topics, people and events on ABS-CBN's newest newsmagazine called what else but "Kontrobersyal," which premiered last Saturday at 10:30 p.m.

Investigating and unearthing the facts beneath the most scandalous personalities, incidents and rumors is the mission of "Kontrobersyal," which is brought to you by the same people behind "The Correspondents" and "The Inside Story."

Boy brings his renowned interviewing skills in probing the minds and lives of newsworthy people and their very public lives in politics, show business or business.



'OGIE LIVE' **Ogie Alcasid performs in "Ogie Alcasid Live in Concert," with John Lapus and Viktoria, on May 9, at Casino Filipino Mimosa. Directed by Al Marcelo, it is sponsored by New Pagcor, PJI, JbsDB.com, with Greenwich Nepo Mall.**

'Comic Divas' at The Venue

STAND-UP comedians Russel, Angel and A.J., collectively known in Manila as the Comic Divas, will entertain guests at The Venue in Davao City on May 16 and 17.

They even have a special guest: "Sing-Galing" master Ethel Booba.

Tickets are only P150, inclusive of one drink. Show starts at 9 p.m.

The funny show is co-sponsored by Linmarr Suites Apartelle.

Metro band rocks Cebu Ratsky's

PURE INSTINCT, a pop band from Metro Manila, is featured in a series of shows at Ratsky's Cebu City until May 10.

The seven-member Pure Instinct combines good dance music with high energy performance. It plays pop, alternative, techno, new wave, retro and mellow pop. Its latest CD album has just been released, featuring the carrier single "Ikaw na Lang Sana" and with an interactive CD.

Good movies coming to town

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

DISTRIBUTORS of foreign movies usually opt to bring over to the Philippines blockbuster films that they expect to fill local moviehouses. This generally "practical," commercial orientation pretty much excludes some small but really good movies, including some award-winning vehicles.

While this policy is understandable from a business point of view, it deprives local film buffs of some truly viewable movies, and thus limits our exposure to genuine film culture. That's why we deplore the practice, and are constantly writing about alternative ways to expose our viewers to fine movies that they would otherwise not be able to see.

These alternative ways include embassy-organized festivals, the Pelikula at Lipunan and CineManila filmfests, quality features on movie cable channels, and tapes and discs of outstanding films available at some shops at Virra Mall, etc.

From time to time, some small but significant movies do make it to local commercial screens, a sign that some distributors may be rethinking their "blockbusters only" policy. This new attitude should be encouraged, because local film buffs will benefit from it.

It could also turn out to be a savvy move from the business point of view, since we now have more lovers of good movies who will go out of their way to patronize exceptional films.

Starting this week, for instance, some interesting movies are up for view. Leading off is "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind," **George Clooney**'s first film as director.

Based on a true story, it's about a TV producer who claims to have been a CIA agent who killed more than 30 people for the US government!

Sam Rockwell plays the plum role of the producer-assassin, and turns in a compelling performance. To hedge his bets, however, Clooney was able to use his clout with his stellar colleagues in the acting community to secure the all-important participation of box-office draws like **Julia Roberts** and **Drew Barrymore**.

Roberts plays a spy, Barrymore is cast as Rockwell's girlfriend, and Clooney adds his own star value to the production by playing a CIA recruiter.

Thus, "Confessions of a Dangerous Mind" can be seen as a creative combination of "indie" substance and big-star value put in to beef up its chances at the box office. Let's hope that this mix of potentially contrary elements works out well and doesn't dilute the project's significance and integrity.

Also a treat for film buffs is the imminent screening (starting May 14) of "The Hours," the film on **Virginia Woolf** that boasts of luminous performances turned in by **Nicole Kidman**, **Meryl Streep** and **Julianne Moore**.

One wonders why, if the film was going to be shown here anyway, it took such a long time for it to get to local movie screens. The best time would have been soon after the Oscars, when Kidman's triumph made people curious about the film that showcased her award-winning performance.

Well, better late than later, so make sure that you catch "The Hours" when it starts its local run next week.

Finally, if **Julie Taymor**'s "Titus" is still showing at ArtFilm, it also deserves local film buffs' attention. **Shakespeare**'s "Titus Andronicus" has never been presented in this edgy and compelling a fashion.

On the local film front, lovers of good movies are properly appreciative of the NCCA Cinema Committee's recent Cinema Paradiso screening of Filipino film classics. Now that it's been established that there's a substantial audience for such mini-filmfests, a new edition should be worked out, in time for the opening of classes.

There are many young Filipinos who haven't seen the finest movies that our filmmakers have made through the years, so the NCCA should make it easier for them to catch up.

'25th Hour'

SPIKE Lee's latest film, "25th Hour," stars **Edward Norton** as a drug dealer whose luck has just run out. After getting caught with incriminating evidence in his apartment, he is left with only 24 hours before he goes to prison for seven years.

In his remaining time, he goes back to his Irish Catholic roots and meets the people who matter most him, as he tries to make sense of his turbulent life.

Also starring in this modern morality tale are **Philip Seymour Hoffman**, **Rosario Dawson** and **Anna Paquin**.

DID YOU KNOW...

A lawmaker from the South insisted on checking into Club Panoly on the weekend that the Mossimo Bikini Summit was being held there, but the Boracay resort hotel was full. A member of the staff of the contest organizers said he was sure the lawmaker "only wanted to get a closer look at the male contestants." The organizers offered to make the legislator a judge in the contest, but the official refused. "He didn't want to be identified," the tattler added.

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Directed by Audie Gemora

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May 3 2pm, 4pm, 6pm
May 4 4pm, 6:30pm

Alabang Town Center
May 9 11am, 4pm, 6pm
May 10 11am, 2pm, 4pm, 6pm
May 11 4pm, 6:30pm

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May 23 4pm, 6:30pm
May 24 11am, 3pm, 5:30pm, 7pm
May 25 11:30am, 3pm, 6pm

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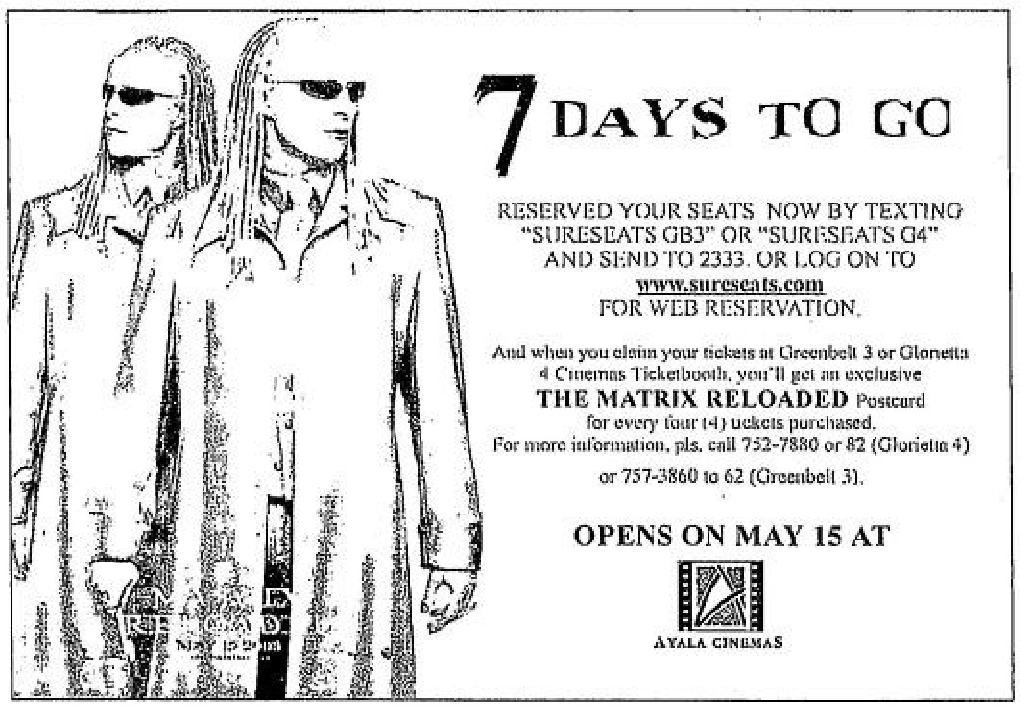

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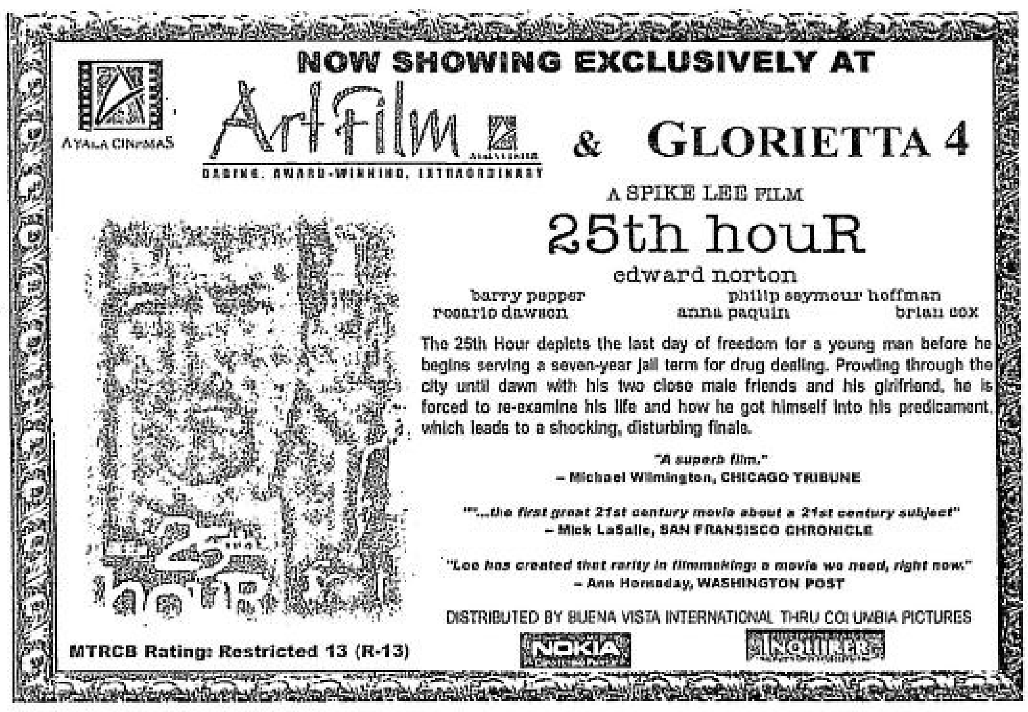
AYALA CINEMAS



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& GLORIETTA 4
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25th houR
edward norton
barry pepper philip seymour hoffman
rosario dawson anna paquin brian cox
The 25th Hour depicts the last day of freedom for a young man before he begins serving a seven-year jail term for drug dealing. Prowling through the city until dawn with his two close male friends and his girlfriend, he is forced to re-examine his life and how he got himself into his predicament, which leads to a shocking, disturbing finale.
"A superb film." – Michael Wilmington, CHICAGO TRIBUNE
"...the first great 21st century movie about a 21st century subject" – Mick LaSalle, SAN FRANSISCO CHRONICLE
"Lee has created that rarity in filmmaking: a movie we need, right now." – Ann Hornaday, WASHINGTON POST
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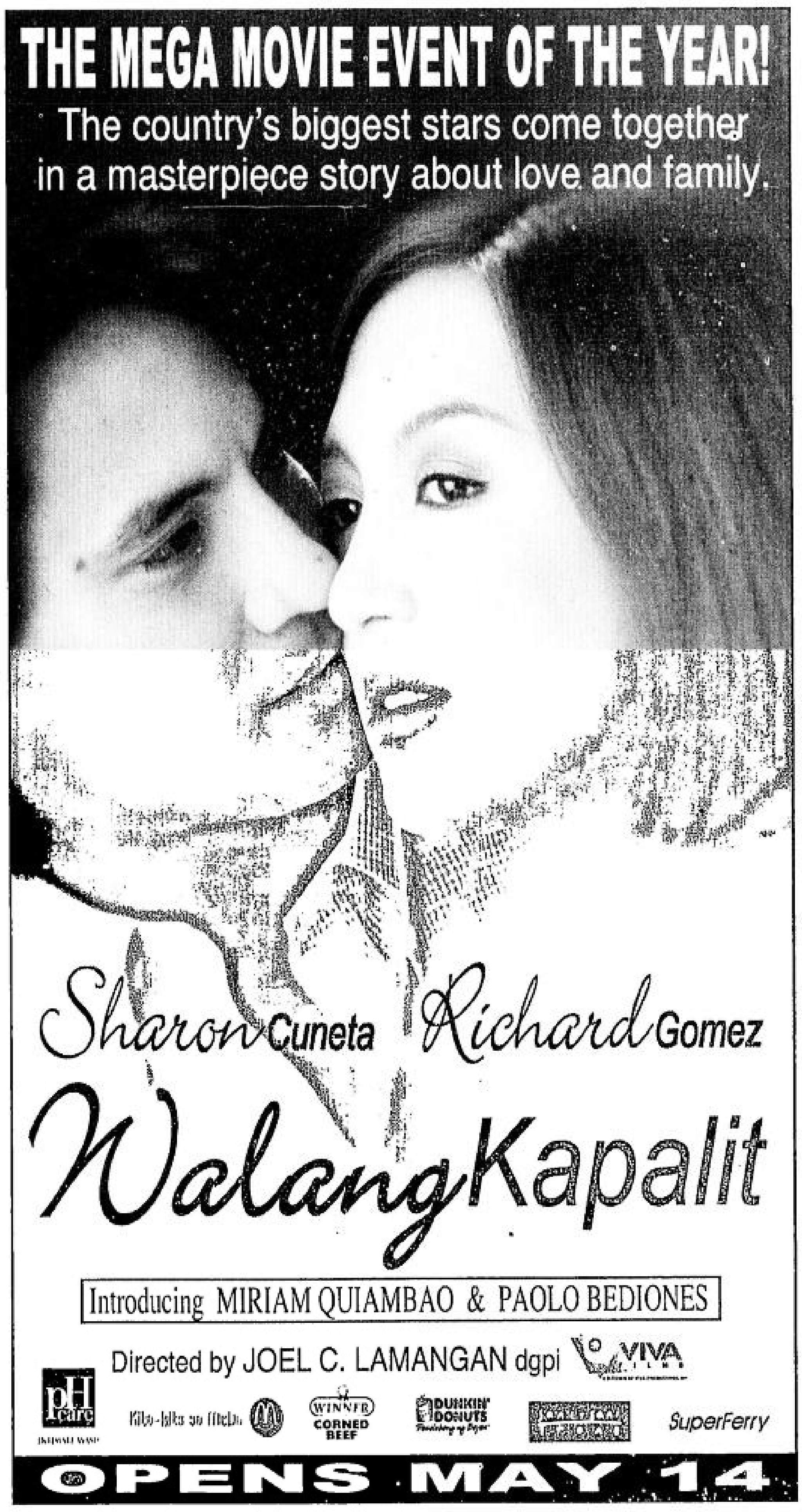

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Directed by JOEL C. LAMANGAN dgpi
VIVA FILMS
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WINNER CORNED BEEF
DUNKIN' DONUTS
SuperFerry
OPENS MAY 14

FPJ: I'd rather make movies than run in '04

By Leah Salterio

THE SHIRT is not a political strategy, says FPJ

"I'D RATHER stay in show biz and make movies."

This is the stock reply of Philippine cinema's action king, Fernando Poe Jr., when asked these days if he would run for president in the 2004 elections.

This was also FPJ's answer when, during Tuesday night's press con for his newest movie, he was asked to confirm talk that he had been invited to be the running mate of former Sen. Raul Roco, who is expected to again run for president in 2004.

"*Kung sino-sino na lång* and I'm the last to know," FPJ told INQUIRER Entertainment before the press con proper started. "I don't want to comment about them. Time-out *muna tayo sa pulitika*. I was never interested in politics anyway."

He also denied that his latest film, "Pakners," is in preparation for his 2004 political campaign.

"This movie is for the masses," he said. "This is not in any way a political move."

He added: "It's really funny because when I shake the hands of people now, they think I'm already campaigning."

He claimed he was surprised that some sectors insist on linking his name to several politicians in connection with the 2004 presidential election. These include Senators Loren Legarda, Gringo Honasan and Tito Sotto, and Ilocos Norte Governor Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., son of the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

FPJ said he was not feeling any pressure to run for president, despite being prodded by his close friend, the fallen former president, Joseph Estrada.

Since his ouster in January 2001, Estrada has been detained at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City. When he turned 66 last April 19, a Black Saturday, Estrada said his birthday wish was for FPJ to run for president. He said his friend, whom he also called "Erap," would be "unbeatable."

But a source close to FPJ said not even Estrada could convince the action king to run in 2004.

Yesterday, asked to comment about Estrada's wish, FPJ said: "Running cannot be given as a birthday gift. It concerns the country."

FPJ visited Estrada at the VMMC on April 14, Holy Monday, a few days before the unseated official's birthday. FPJ gifted his friend with a jacket and brought him snacks.

FPJ's actress-wife, Susan Roces, has been quiet about her husband's political plans.

FPJ showed up at the Tuesday night press con for "Pakners" not in his trademark denim jacket and pants but in a colorful Hawaiian floral shirt which he also used in the movie.

"This is not a (political) strategy," he said of his new look. "Roco and (Manila Mayor Lito) Atienza have been doing this. I wore this today only for a change."

The press con was held at the Acacia Restaurant in Greenhills, San Juan, owned by Estrada's son, former San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Ejercito.

FPJ will be busy not to campaign but to promote "Pakners," which also stars billiards champion Efren "Bata" Reyes.

SHOW STOPPERS

TRIPLE THREAT
White-suited and nearly red-faced from their musical effort, (from left) MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, Interior and Local Government Secretary Joey Lina, and Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes do like the Three Tenors—minus the high notes—as they sing "Tonight" from "West Side Story" in Monday night's "Salute" concert at the Manila Hotel.

PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

DEFENSE POSITION
Secretary Reyes, backed by a Hot Legs dancer, is not exactly wooden in his performance of the Elvis Presley classic, "Wooden Heart."

HEROIC BAYANI
Fernando of MMDA shows he's brave enough to do a duet with the singer with the iron lungs, Dulce, in "Gaano Kita Kamahal."

From 'who's sleeping with whom?' to 'who's wearing what?'

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I RECEIVED a surprise text message from G Toengi, who said she's in town for a month and is shooting for her billboard ad. So G is going to be the next face that will launch a thousand products? She will be endorsing a clothing store.

With all the celebrity endorsers luring us to don this and that apparel, the thing these days is no longer being "brand-conscious" but more of turning into stars' look-alikes.

The question used to be "Who's sleeping with whom?" Now it's also "Who's wearing what?"

Chin-Chin's nature

CHIN-CHIN Gutierrez is still riding high after landing on the cover of Time magazine as one of the Asian Heroes for her tireless crusade for Mother Nature. The ravishing actress describes herself as multi-dimensional and, true enough, she has got her hands full these days.

She's wrapping up a collection of Filipino lullabies.

"It's a double disc which will be released in June," she said. "It's very interesting because the CD tapped various sources of music from our tribes and natives all over. The sales of the album will be for the tribes, too. Artists like **Joey Ayala**, **Tots Tolentino** and many more have a part in the collection.

"You'll be surprised at what can be music to your ears aside from MTV stuff."

Chin-Chin is also busy rehearsing for her role as Valentina in Ballet Philippines' remake of the Pinoy classic, "Darna," which is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

She gushed: "It's not your typical musical. An Australian stage actor will teach us how to fly with support. The play will be sort of a mix of the Sex Bombs and 'Les Miserables.' It will bring the *masa* to the CCP."

Whatever Chin-Chin does, she never does it half-heartedly. With or without the Time accolade, she's always been that way. It's her nature, even when only Mother Nature is watching.

Jimwell in a jam

THIS e-mail about beleaguered cager **Jimwell Torion** struck me. I think it's worth looking into, although I know that Torion is going through hell now and it's not my intention to aggravate matters for him by printing this e-mail.

If at all, the following allegations should prompt Torion to resolve whatever unfinished business he's got and clear his name once and for all.

Indeed, life can sometimes be like a ball game. And if we play by the rules, life will be one grand ball.

"Dear Dollywood,

"This is right up your alley. With what happened with Jimwell Torion, I think he is trying to (tell the) media that he is a victim that needs understanding, a person who just made a stupid mistake.

"Jimwell should be ashamed of himself. He even tried to use his family to look good in the eyes of the public. The truth is, Jimwell is living in with a girl whose name is **Mae**. She used to work for Jaguar Cars in Makati and they have been living together for well over two years. Mae's family is from Cavite and she is a nurse. What's sad about it is that Jimwell tore a good relationship between Mae and her fiance who works for Globe Telecoms. She broke up with him to be with Jimwell.

"I think he does not deserve to have a second chance to play again at the PBA. I think it is best if he gets into drug rehab, anger management training and domestic violence courses. You can research the veracity of my information.

"Sincerely,
Josh Nash."

Glimpse of GMA

THANKS is more than I can say to my loyal reader from the US, **Andy Matangga**, for the vote of confidence. In behalf of all the homesick Pinoys abroad, Andy is asking when GMA-7 will have its own cable network in the States since its rival ABS-CBN 2 has its own "TFC" (The Filipino Channel). As Andy puts it, "We also want to get a glimpse of the stars of GMA. It gets boring seeing the same faces all over again."

I'm pretty sure GMA-7 won't leave the viewers' clamor unheeded. If and when Channel 7 airs its shows abroad, that would take the never-ending battle of the networks to a different realm.

Let's hope that the stiffer the competition is, the better the shows get.

Paolo at Friends

PAOLO Santos has hit the big time in the acoustic music scene, but he has remained so unassuming. I've watched him "grow" as an artist since he started playing in our common hangout, Friends @ d Square at St. Francis Square in Mandaluyong City. Now Paolo is back to his roots.

Chill out with Paolo Santos every Monday of May and June at Friends. Free entrance inclusive of fun and relaxation.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or jaimealsan@yahoo.com

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PINOCCHIO GP 12:20,2:45,5:10, 7:35,10:00	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE P13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10	CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND P13 12:50,3:05,5:20,7:35,9:50
X-MEN 2 P13 1:05,3:55, 6:45,9:35	X-MEN 2 P13 12:10,3:00, 5:50,8:40	X-MEN 2 P13 2:00,4:50, 7:40,10:30

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ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	XEREX
Ali 2	TILL THERE WAS YOU
Ali 3	BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
Ali 4	X-MEN 2
Ali 5	CONFESSION OF A DANGEROUS MIND
Ali 6	BAYARAN
Ali 7	JOHNNY ENGLISH
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	X-MEN 2
Farmers 2	XEREX
ARANETA COLISEUM	
MAY 9 & 10	MARTIN & REGINE CONCERT
MAY 16	ALLAN K CONCERT
MAY 17	NORA AUNOR CONCERT
ELEPHANT WORLD	
FUN RIDES	START
TAGADISCO	4PM
VIKING SHIP	(DAILY)

THEATRE MALL
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DOLBY DIGITAL
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1
X-MEN 2
11:00, 1:40, 4:20,
7:00, 9:40
PG13

CINEMA 2
BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE
11:40, 1:55, 4:10,
6:25, 8:40
PG13

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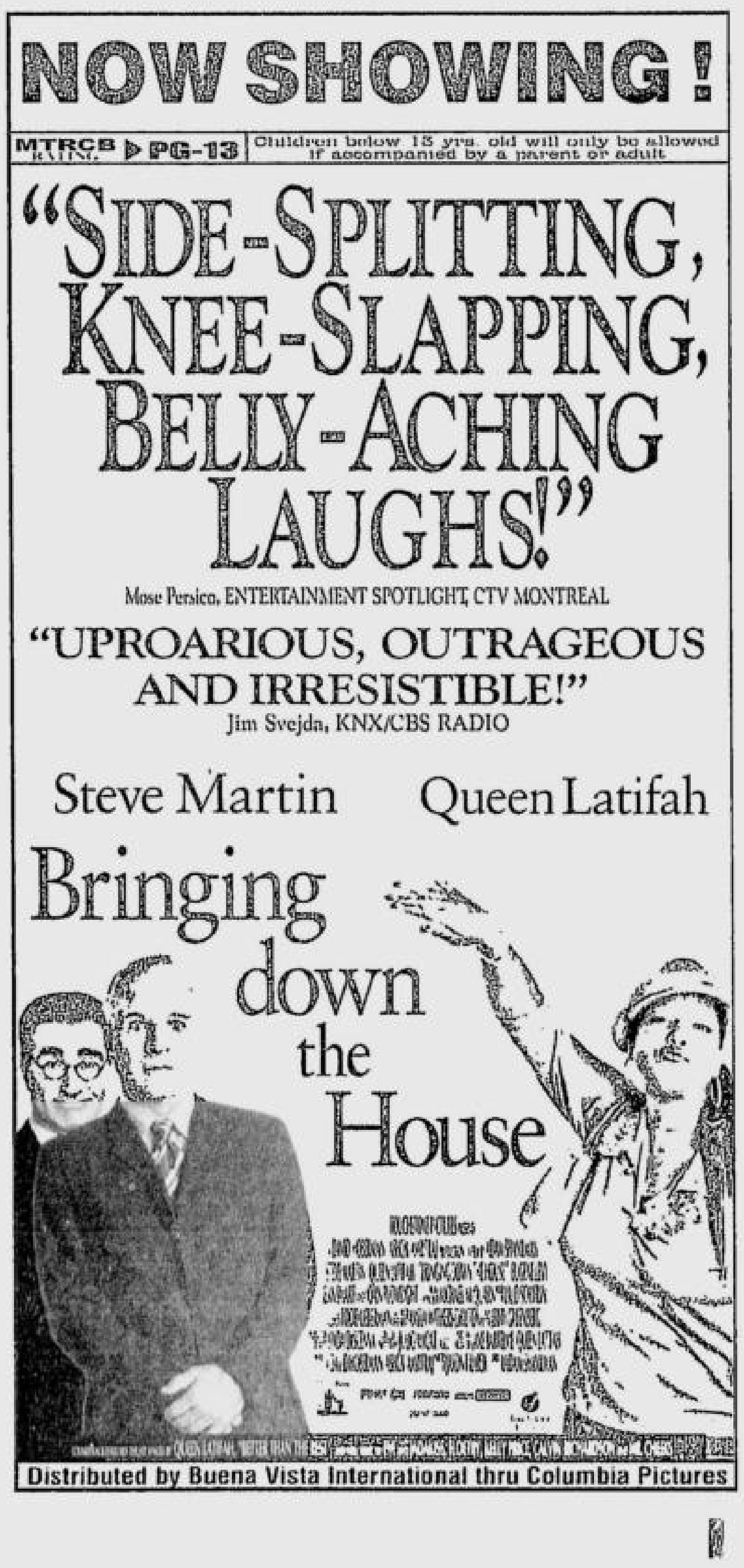
THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	PUNLA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	PUNLA
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	TILL THERE WAS YOU
B	BAYARAN
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-2	BAYARAN
CINEMA-3	XEREX
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	JOHNNY ENGLISH
CINEMA-6	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-7	A MAN APART
CINEMA-8	PUNLA
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	X-MEN 2
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	BRINGING THE HOUSE DOWN
CINEMA-12	PINOCCHIO
CINEMA-14	TILL THERE WAS YOU
CINEMA-15	CONFESSION OF DANGEROUS MIND
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LANES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA



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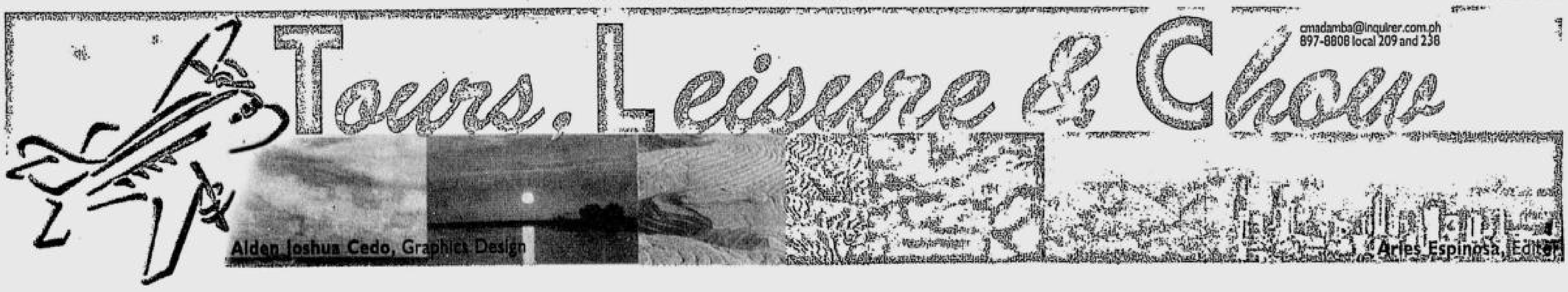

Tours, Leisure & Chow

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MAKATI SHANGRI-LA'S BUFFET

'Red carpet' treatment for moms this Sunday

MAKATI Shangri-La rolls out the red carpet for all Moms in observance of Mother's Day on Sunday, May 11.

Families can treat the special woman of their lives with a sumptuous lunch or dinner buffet at Island Café that features fine local and international selections. Island Café's buffet spread includes a sushi and sashimi station, fresh green vegetables and healthy salads, an array of hot dishes, soups and carving station offering mouth-watering prime ribs and tempting desserts. The lunch and dinner buffet is priced at P 1,150++ per person.

Those with a yen for Japanese food can bring mom to Inagiku where she can help herself to a wide selection of sushi and sashimi and the restaurant's famous prawn tempura. There is also a teppan station where the chefs grill high-grade beef, shrimp, pork, chicken and assorted vegetables among many others. Lunch buffet is priced at P1,095 per person.

Families consisting of at least 10 persons can celebrate this special occasion with a lavish Chinese meal at Shang Palace. Chinese executive chef Alan Tsang has prepared three kinds of menus consisting of at least 10 dishes including the restaurant's specialty, Peking duck. Set menus are priced of P12,800++, P14,800++ and P16,800++ for groups of at least 10 persons.

Merienda buffet at Lobby Lounge

Moms may also take a delightful break at the spacious Lobby Lounge where light afternoon snack favorites ranging from traditional Filipino marina favorites, Chinese dumplings and Continental cakes and pastries are made available to her. Lobby Lounge's marina buffet is priced at P750++ per person.

Sure palate-pleasers are the pastry chef's confectioneries like cakes, pastries and chocolates. Mother's Day hampers laden with gourmet goodies are also available at Gourmet Corner from May 5 to 11.

For inquiries and reservations, call Makati Shangri-La's restaurant reservations and information center at 840-0884.

New World Renaissance Hotel appoints new GM

THE MANAGEMENT of the New World Renaissance Hotel announces the appointment of its new general manager Stephan Stoss.

Prior to his new posting, Stoss was general manager of the Renaissance Yangtze Shanghai Hotel in China, formerly the Yangtze New World Hotel. In March 2001, he took over the leadership of the property to oversee its rebranding as a Renaissance hotel, the first in mainland China.

Stoss joined Marriott International Inc. in 1998 as resident manager for the Marriott Hotel and Marriott Executive Apartments Budapest, Hungary, following an assignment as director of rooms operations and executive assistant manager at the Renaissance Moscow Hotel, Russia from 1991 to 1997. Previous to joining the Marriott group, he had appointments with Hilton International in Abu Dhabi, Duesseldorf, London and Munich.

Stoss was born in Ulm, Germany and graduated from the Landesberufschule for Hotel and Restaurant Industry, also in Germany.

Where to Shop Where to GO

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

NEW WORLD RENAISSANCE HOTEL
New World Renaissance Hotel
Esperanza St. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 811-6888 / Fax. 811-6777

Makati Shangri-La MANILA
Makati Shangri-La Hotel
Ayala Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 813-8888 / Fax. 813-5499

Dusit Hotel Nikko
Dusit Hotel Nikko
Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City Phil.
Tel. 867-3333 Email: dusitmnl@dusit.com

Barcelo Hotels and Resorts
4/F Adamson Centre, 121 LP Leviste St, Salcedo Village, Makati
Tel. (02) 867-1159 / Fax. (02) 867-1185

Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort CEBU, PHILIPPINES
Mactan Island Resort
Punta Engaño Road, Lapu Lapu, Cebu
Tel. (632) 231-0288/Fax (632) 231-1688

INTERCONTINENTAL. MANILA
Hotel InterContinental
1 Ayala Avenue, Makati City
Tel.815-9711

THE MARCO POLO DAVAO
The Marco Polo
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Hotel Veniz
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City Travel Hotel
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Skyrise Hotel
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Tel (074) 445-6834 to 36/Fax(074)443-3897

SUPREME
Hotel Supreme
113 Magsaysay Ave., Baguio City
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THE PENINSULA MANILA
The Peninsula Manila Hotel
Cor. Ayala Ave. & Makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 810-3456 / Fax. 815-4825

Mandarin Oriental Manila Hotel
Cor. Paseo de Roxas & Makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 750-8888 / Fax. 817-2472

The Bellevue Manila
North Bridgeway, Northgate Cyberzone,Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa
Tel. (632) 771-8181/Fax(632) 771-8282

WATERFRONT
Waterfront Hotel Lahug
I Salinas Drive, Lahug Cebu City
Tel. (6332) 232-6888/Fax (6332) 232-6880

WATERFRONT
Waterfront Hotel Mactan
I Airport Road, Lapu Lapu City, 6015
Tel. (6332) 340-4888/Fax (6332) 340-5693

Royal Mandaya Hotel
J. Palma Gil St., Davao City
Tel. (082) 225-8888/Fax (082) 225-1888

Camp John Hay Manor
Loakan Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 446-0231 to 50/845-0892/845-0911
Fax. (074) 445-0420

Cooyeesan Hotel Plaza
Naguilian cor. Asin Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 447-8888 to 93/(074) 447-8895 to 98
Fax. (074) 447-0494

The Golden Pine
Golden Pine Hotel and Restaurant
Intersection of Cariño St. and Legarda Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 444-9965 to 72/ 740-8975 / Fax. (074) 446-0704

Taal Vista Hotel
Aguinaldo Highway, Tahaytay City
Tel. (046) 413- 1000 / Fax. (046) 413-1225

For feedback and inquiries, call
899-4426 or 897-8808 loc 209

Mother's Day treats at Dusit Hotel Nikko

MOM deserves no less than the best.

That's why on May 11, show Mom how special she is and indulge her with gastronomical treats offered at Dusit Hotel Nikko

Culinary Delights. Celebrate Mother's Day at any of Dusit Hotel's outlets - Benkay Japanese Restaurant, Benjarong Royal Thai Cuisine, Thien Duong Vietnamese Cuisine or The Café Restaurant and treat the whole family to a special Mother's Day Buffet or set menu for only P500++ per person (30 percent off for kids below 12 years). Delight her further with a complimentary greeting card, a memorable photo with the whole family, a freshly baked treat and a flower to cap the day.

Or go all the way and pamper Mom with first class accommodations using either one of Dusit's special room packages.

Weekend choices. For P2,800++ per night, avail yourself of overnight accommodation in a Deluxe room for two adults and two children with complimentary buffet breakfast for two at The Café Restaurant and choose one from these three value-added perks: A P500 food and beverage voucher which may be used at all Dusit outlets (Benkay Japanese Restaurant, Benjarong Royal Thai Cuisine, Thien Duong Vietnamese Cuisine or The Café Restaurant); Complimentary 24-hour use of broadband Internet access; or add P800 and get an upgrade to an Executive Suite room. Book a second night and avail yourself of a special rate of P1,500++ (room accommodation only), maximum of two nights extension. Sunday bookings will be good for one night extension only.

One-peso weekend madness. Take advantage of Dusit's "One Peso Weekend Madness" where guests may avail themselves of a De Luxe Room for two consecutive nights at a special rate of P4,800.00 net per night (good for two adults and two children inclusive of buffet breakfast for two at The Café) and purchase an additional overnight stay voucher (room accommodation only) for only one peso! All one peso weekend madness vouchers must be redeemed on or before July 30.

Above room rates are applicable for local residents and expatriates with Alien Certificate of Residency (ACR) and valid on weekends (Friday till Sunday) for the whole month of May.

For reservations or inquiries, call 867-3333 extensions 3131 to 3134, or email resvnmnl@dusit.com.

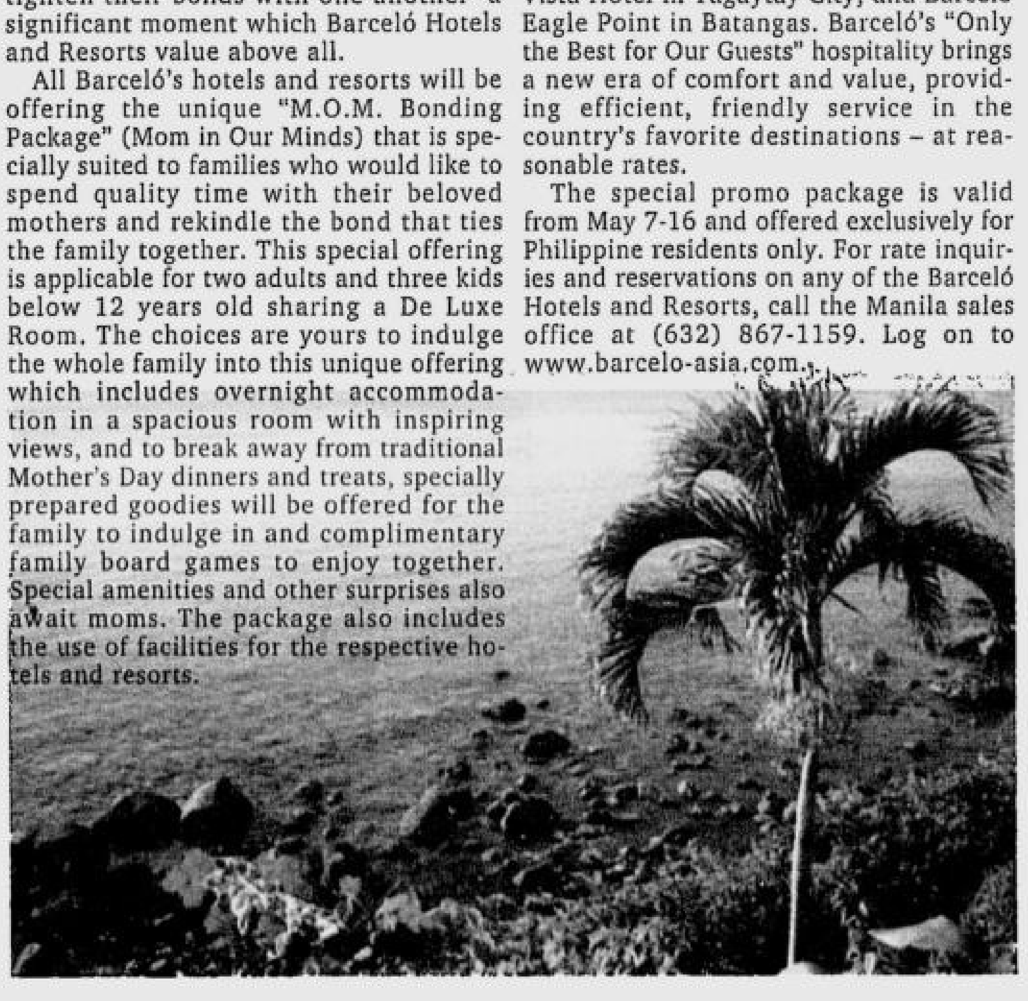
Family bliss at Barcelo Hotels and resorts for Mother's Day

SPENDING precious time with loved ones has always been a much-awaited moment for every family especially in this day and age. One of these special moments is the celebration of Mother's Day--a special time for family members to tighten their bonds with one another- a significant moment which Barceló Hotels and Resorts value above all.

All Barceló's hotels and resorts will be offering the unique "M.O.M. Bonding Package" (Mom in Our Minds) that is specially suited to families who would like to spend quality time with their beloved mothers and rekindle the bond that ties the family together. This special offering is applicable for two adults and three kids below 12 years old sharing a De Luxe Room. The choices are yours to indulge the whole family into this unique offering which includes overnight accommodation in a spacious room with inspiring views, and to break away from traditional Mother's Day dinners and treats, specially prepared goodies will be offered for the family to indulge in and complimentary family board games to enjoy together. Special amenities and other surprises also await moms. The package also includes the use of facilities for the respective hotels and resorts.

The hotels and resorts under the helm of the Barceló Group are The Barceló Pearl Farm Island Resort in Samal Island; Barceló Sarabia Manor Hotel and Convention Center in Iloilo City; Barceló Asturias Hotel in Puerto Princesa; Taal Vista Hotel in Tagaytay City; and Barceló Eagle Point in Batangas. Barceló's "Only the Best for Our Guests" hospitality brings a new era of comfort and value, providing efficient, friendly service in the country's favorite destinations – at reasonable rates.

The special promo package is valid from May 7-16 and offered exclusively for Philippine residents only. For rate inquiries and reservations on any of the Barceló Hotels and Resorts, call the Manila sales office at (632) 867-1159. Log on to www.barcelo-asia.com.



Waterfront Cebu's retro party events

NOW IT'S the adults' time to kick off those shoes and party! Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino whips up a party treat that will surely keep moms and dads up and dancing. Dubbed "My Mommy Can Dance, My Daddy Can Rock N' Roll", the party-concert features two of the country's hottest retro bands.

The Mother's day presentation features "Spirit of '67" on May 10 at the Pacific Grand Ballroom. For Father's Day, "RJ and Friends" are performing on June 14 at the Atlantic Hall. On both events, dinner will be served at 7 p.m. and the band performance starts at 9 p.m. Tickets are at P1,000 per person, inclusive of dinner and dancing.

Special promo packages may also be availed of at the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel. Early birds pay only P3,000 when you buy two tickets each for both shows in a single purchase. A room package (subject to room availability) is also offered at P3,500 per show which includes two tickets (dinner and show), overnight stay for two at a Superior Room with breakfast.

Tickets to "My Mommy Can Dance, My Daddy Can Rock N' Roll" are available at the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel, (032) 232-6888 and at Kaona Grill (032) 234-2865.

The retro-party event series is presented by Pepsi, Smart, Cebu Pacific, San Miguel Beer, Kaona Grill, Nestle Calcium Plus, Chrysler Cebu, 103.5 Wild FM Cebu, Mom's Radio 88.3 FM Cebu.

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Nokia 7250	-	-	-	-	2,000	FREE	FREE
Nokia 6610	-	-	-	2,000	FREE	FREE	FREE
Nokia 6610 (w/ camera & headset)	-	-	-	-	FREE	FREE	FREE
Nokia 7210	-	-	-	5,000	FREE	FREE	FREE
Nokia 7210 (w/ camera & headset)	-	-	-	-	3,000	FREE	FREE
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Podium	May 1-18
Festival Mall (& TSI)	May 1-18
SM Megamall (& TSI)	May 1-18
Greenbelt	May 1-18
Smart Tower	May 1-18
SM North EDSA (& TSI)	May 1-18
Robinsons Galleria	May 6-18
Binondo	May 1-18
SM Davao	May 1-18
SM Cebu (& TSI)	May 1-18
Mango Road Cebu	May 1-18
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*TELECOM SPECIALISTS, INC.

[illegible]	DATES
EDSA Shangri-la	May 1 - 11
Rockwell Powerplant	May 1 - 11
Alabang Town Center	May 1 - 11
Robinsons Malate	May 1 - 12
Podium	May 1 - 11
Festival Mall	May 5 - 18
Mile High Camp John Hay**	May 7 - 18

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THURSDAY,
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Meralco to cut rates by 12¢ per kWh

By Abigail L. Ho and Doris C. Dumlao

CUSTOMERS of the Manila Electric Co. stand to pay 12 centavos less per kilowatt-hour as a result of an agreement with state-run National Power Corp. to have the company's independent power producers run at higher capacities.

On top of the possible 12-centavo rate cut, Meralco customers can also get another 12-centavo reduction with the agreement in principle with the Malampaya natural gas project consortium to amend gas pricing provisions with First Gas Power Corp., a Meralco IPP.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez told reporters yesterday that the recently concluded mediation proceedings between Napocor and Meralco would redound to savings of 12 to 13 centavos for consumers because of the decrease in the highly criticized purchased power adjustment.

With the power distributor's IPPs running at higher capacities, the price per kWh of electricity would go down due to economies of scale.

Data from Meralco indicated that the PPA in May had gone down to P2.72 from P2.90 in April. Although this was mainly brought by the strengthening of the peso against the dollar, Meralco officials said its IPPs' running at higher capacities would also contribute to the PPA's further decline in the coming months.

Meantime, the DOE is urging the Energy Regulatory Commission to approve before May 15 the appropriate method by which Meralco should refund its customers about P30 billion in overcharges since 1994.

"The ERC should work on it now. There should not be any foot-dragging. We hope that the ERC works expeditiously in this issue. The sooner this is implemented, the better," Perez said.

Still, he said it was doubtful that the ERC could arrive at a final decision by May 15.

The Supreme Court decision compelling Meralco to refund all its customers the overcharges it had been getting since 1994 would become final and executory by May 15. The decision was handed down on April 30.

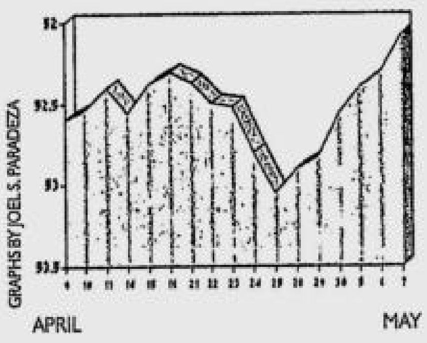
Perez said that the DOE was set to submit to the ERC by Monday the results of its consultations with various civil society and consumer groups regarding the refund issue.

These financial constraints have prompted Meralco to cut back on fresh investments this year, allotting only P4.5 billion in capital expenditures compared to the P6.5 billion spent last year.

But Meralco assured the public that the spending slowdown would not hamper efforts to improve its infrastructure.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱52.07 = $1
As of 5 p.m., May 7, 2003

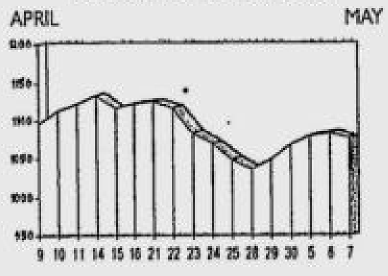
¥117.66 = $1
As of 5 p.m., May 7, 2003

GOLD: $343.25-343.55
per ounce Hong Kong, May 7, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end down

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

STOCKS fell yesterday as players took a breather after four days of gains and waited for more first-quarter results, analysts said.

The main index eased 6.11 points or 0.56 percent to 1,077.90. It is up 5.84 percent this year.

Turnover rose to P299.6 million from P185.9 million on Tuesday. Losers beat gainers 35 to 13 and there were 28 stocks unchanged.

"This a technical correction after a four-day rally," said AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan. "I guess we ran out of fresh news locally, so investors took this as an excuse to sell."

First-quarter results from some of the nation's biggest companies should give investors a better view of the corporate outlook this year, analysts said. Ayala Corp., the largest conglomerate with interests ranging from banking and property to telecommunications, will release its January to March numbers tomorrow. *Reuters*

SM group plans to build new malls in China

By Elena R. Torrijos

IN A shift in strategy to cautiously penetrate the promising China market, the family of SM group founder Henry Sy plans to set up next year a few small, standardized malls in areas outside Shanghai and Beijing that would be a template for further expansion if successful.

Through a Hong Kong-based company, the Sy family currently owns majority stake in two relatively large profitable malls in Xiamen.

A person familiar with the matter said that if the strategy to establish smaller, standardized yet attractive malls proved effective, then the group would hasten the pace of expansion across China.

Moreover, the group would consider either listing the Hong Kong-based holding firm or merging it with the family's publicly listed domestic retail vehicle, SM Prime Holdings.

"If it's successful (then maybe we'll do a merger with SM Prime). We don't want investors to be at risk but still benefit from a lot of potential," the source said.

The smaller malls are expected to cost roughly half a billion pesos each. Financing for any subsequent large-scale expansion would probably be sourced from outside the group, through borrowings or other sources.

"It's easy to raise money if you have a good idea," the source said.

The group, however, plans to concentrate on establishing a presence in areas where competition was not too stiff, thus leaving Shanghai out of the picture.

The source said that the planned further expansion in China was being driven by the need for the SM group to diversify its operations out of the Philippines.

The local retail market could be saturated within seven to eight years given SM Prime's plan to establish at least two malls every year for the next several years.

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$16.18B IN APRIL

Dollar reserves up

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE COUNTRY'S dollar reserves went up by $200 million in April to $16.18 billion after the central bank received the remaining proceeds of a $585-million loan.

The gross international reserves or GIR stood at $15.98 billion in March.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the GIR slightly increased due to higher foreign exchange inflows, particularly interest income, and the revaluation of gold reserves.

The central bank taps fund managers to handle the investment of about $2 billion of the country's reserves. These investments contribute to the GIR in terms of interest income.

Since gold forms part of the reserves, the GIR increases every time gold prices go up.

The BSP said the country's gross reserves could sufficiently pay for nearly five months worth of imports of goods and services. The level, according to the BSP, is equivalent to about 2.6 times of the country's short-term debt based on original maturity.

A strong GIR helps strengthen the peso as it indicates that the BSP has sufficient dollars to stave off demand in the spot market.

From 52.30 to $1, the peso yesterday closed at 52.07 to $1, its highest level since September last year.

The peso is the region's fourth biggest gainer since the start of the year, a big improvement from its previous status as Asia's worst performer. On a year-to-date basis, the peso had recovered 2.9 percent of the value previously lost.

As the peso continues to stabilize, the pressure on the central bank to draw from the GIR to defend the local currency eases.

Tetangco said the central bank used $500 million of a loan signed in March to settle a maturing obligation but kept $85 million of the total proceeds.

The central bank borrowings are used to boost the country's external payment position and, in effect, help build up dollar reserves.

The central bank also uses its dollar reserves to intervene in the market and help strengthen the peso. The BSP also lends portion of the reserves to banks. When need arises, the BSP also borrows from banks to beef up the GIR.

The government is expecting the GIR to slip to $15.62 billion by yearend on expectations of a reduced foreign exchange inflow due to the slowdown in exports.

The country's dollar reserves rose to an all-time high of $17.352 billion in March 2002 mainly due to the inflow of foreign loans forged by the national government to finance a budget deficit that reached P212.7 billion.

A strong GIR assures the country's trading partners that it could pay its debts and importation. Thus, it should further improve the confidence of foreign investors and creditors in the Philippines.

The GIR consists of of foreign currency, the BSP's gold holdings and special drawing rights, the currency used by the IMF.

Aside from healthy reserves, the central bank is counting on strong dollar remittances to help buoy the peso. Last year, Filipino workers overseas sent home $7 billion in remittances that supplied enough dollars to the spot market.

HK firm to invest ₱105M in Philweb

By Doris C. Dumlao

AN AFFILIATE of leading Hong Kong fund manager Yu Ming Investment Management Ltd. is set to invest about P105 million in Philweb.com, the technology holding company of former Trade Minister Roberto Ongpin.

The proceeds will be used by Philweb to bankroll an Internet-based sports betting venture with state-controlled Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), company spokesperson Roberto Valdes told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

Under the deal approved by Philweb on Tuesday, Yu Ming's affiliate Timford Investment Ltd. will infuse the fresh funds through a private placement equivalent to about 8.04 billion Philweb shares at 1.3 centavos per share.

The price was equivalent to Philweb's closing price on Tuesday and the weighted average of the closing prices of Philweb shares for the last 30 days.

The PSE is discouraging the issuance of new shares to investors at discounts beyond 10 percent of the market price or of book value, whichever is higher. This safeguard seeks to prevent the unfair dilution of that stakes of minority shareholders.

Shares involved in any corporate deal—such as private placements, debt-to-equity conversions, share-for-share or property-for-share swap—that are priced at discounts beyond the allowed level are not permitted to list unless a rights or public offering is first undertaken.

In a circular yesterday, the PSE said it needed to see the complete terms and conditions of the Philweb transaction before deciding whether the said listing rule was applicable.

Valdes said the new shares to be issued to Yu Ming's affiliate would be covered by a six-month lock-up period.

Petron Q1 profit down

By Abigail L. Ho

OIL giant Petron Corp. yesterday reported a net income of P445 million in the first quarter, 32 percent lower than last year's P652 million.

In a statement issued yesterday, the company attributed the profit decline to the emergency shutdown of its largest crude distillation unit for three weeks in February, which forced the company to import finished products during the period. At that time, international prices of oil products were at their highest because of the Iraq war jitters.

"Despite the temporary setback we endured early this year, we remain optimistic that our margins will continue to improve as crude prices stabilize," Petron public affairs manager Virginia Ruivivar said in a statement.

"In the meantime, we continue to focus on enhancing internal efficiencies to create a robust platform for future growth," she added.

The company posted a 15-percent improvement in sales volume with the sale of 12.7 million barrels for the first three months of the year. It sold 11.1 million barrels in the same period last year.

The higher sales volume was attributed to export and industrial sales that grew by 32 percent and 16 percent, respectively.

Megaworld income up 6%

By Elena R. Torrijos

MEGAWORLD Corp., owned by businessman Andrew Tan, said its net income last year grew by 6 percent to P432 million from P408.4 million in the previous year.

However, Megaworld said real estate sales fell slightly to P2.58 billion last year compared with the P2.678 billion registered in the previous year. This was attributed to the conservative booking of income to reflect longer payment schemes given to buyers. As a result, sales transactions that did not reach the company's 25-percent collection requirement as of end last year were excluded from its gross profit.

The growth in sales volume was reflected in the customers' deposit accounts, which increased by 59 percent to P2 billion from P1.259 billion. Sales were derived mainly from Megaworld's Paseo Parkview Towers 1 and 2 projects, the Eastwood Excelsior Towers 1 and 2, Olympic Heights Towers 1, 2 and 3, One Orchard Road 1, 2 and 3 and Eastwood Cyber One. Except for the Paseo Parkview Towers, the rest of the projects are located in Eastwood City in Libis, Quezon City.

INTEREST RATES

May 07, 2003-MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 7-May-03 (%)	MART1 6-May-03 (%)
1 Month	7.8096	7.8283
3 Months	7.9019	8.1
6 Months	8.7646	8.7409
1 Year	9.0635	9.2558
2 Years	9.5288	9.6481
3 Years	10.4673	10.4231
4 Years	11.1731	11.2
5 Years	11.5269	11.5635
7 Years	11.9979	12.1942
10 Years	12.8154	12.9038
20 Years	13.2519	13.2865
25 Years	13.7096	13.7962

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, May 7, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	1,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	15.75	15.75	15.75	15.75?	8,300
Bank of the Phil. Islands	38	38	36.5	37.5?	1,201,000
China Banking Corp.	680	680	680	680?	4,600
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	25.5	25.5	24.5	25.5	166,600
First E-Bank Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.55	.55?	30,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28.5	28.5	28	28.5	33,500
Philippine National Bank	25	25	24.75	24.75	4,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.5	17.5	17.25	17.25?	17,200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42?	1,055,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1380	1390	1380	1390?	1,660
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.71	0.75	0.71	.75?	60,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1040	1055	1040	1050?	4,490
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	120,800
Diversified Fin. Network	3.95	4	3.95	4?	20,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.71	.72?	2,410,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	570	575	570	570	68,120
ISM Communications Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	3,000,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3	3	3	3	11,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	2,740,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	395	395	385	385?	59,860
Ivantage Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	100,000
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	2,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	6.9	6.9	6.6	6.6?	94,000
Manila Electric Co. B	10	10	9.9	9.9?	370,000
Petron Corp.	2.14	2.14	2.02	2.12?	8,196,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.46	1.46?	445,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.5	2.5	2.48	2.48?	136,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc	0.55	0.55	0.55	.55?	1,800,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	5,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.58	1.58?	80,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.72	.72?	700,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30	30	29.5	29.5?	13,600
Jollibee Foods Corp.	15.5	15.5	14.75	15.25?	1,082,600
RFM Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.72	.72?	130,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57	56.5	57	49,000
San Miguel Corp. B	65.5	66	65.5	66	64,600
Universal Robina Corp.	4	4.1	4	4.1?	3,352,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.225	0.225	0.225	.225?	120,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	2,578,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.025	0.025	0.025	.025?	400,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.005	.0055?	3,000,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.215	0.22	0.21	0.215	1,800,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.055	0.055	0.055	.055?	400,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.235	.235?	80,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.2?	191,000
Ionics Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.63	.63?	660,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44?	50,000
Megaworld Corp.	5700	0.57	0.57	0.57	410,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	660,000
Music Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.26	.27?	1,310,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.03	0.03	0.03	.03?	200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9?	18,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	20,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12?	10,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.88	1.96	1.86	1.96?	81,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5?	3,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Bella Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.39	.4?	1,180,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	3100	0.31	0.31	0.31	50,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
Abs-Cbn Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5?	36,500
Pldt 10% Pref Series Cc	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	10,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	.5	5	4.85	4.9?	1,972,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.145	.145?	820,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.165	.165?	720,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.88	.89?	7,650,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	200,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	120,000
Sm Prime Holdings Inc.	4.9	5	4.9	4.95	15,292,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	1,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.2	0.195	.195?	3,970,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.2	0.2	0.2	.2?	2,800,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.26	0.26	0.26	.26?	20,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	.0024?	11,000,000

DISCLOSURES

ABACUS Consolidated Resources & Holdings Inc. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from May 8 to June 30, 9 a.m. at the Café Centennial of Club Filipino in San Juan, Metro Manila. Stockholders of record as of June 20 will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

KEPPEL Philippines Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 11, 2 p.m. at the Manila AB Room of Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Only stockholders of record as of May 7 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Long Distance and Telephone Co. declared cash dividends amounting to P12.42 million on the company's outstanding series IV non-convertible redeemable preferred stock, payable on June 15 to stockholders of record as of May 26.

* * *

BENPRES Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 11.

* * *

ALASKA Milk Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 20, 9 a.m. at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Stockholders of record as of March 5 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

BANCO de Oro Universal Bank will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 26, 3 p.m. at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Stockholders of record as of April 24 are entitled to vote at the meeting. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

May 7, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.874891	1.000000	52.305000
Japan	Yen	0.007444	0.008509	0.445100
United Kingdom	Pound	1.412248	1.614200	84.430700
Hongkong	Dollar	0.112183	0.128225	6.706800
Switzerland	Franc	0.660245	0.754660	39.472500
Canada	Dollar	0.628062	0.717875	37.548500
Singapore	Dollar	0.502869	0.574779	30.063800
Australia	Dollar	0.557823	0.637592	33.349200
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.320788	2.652661	138.747400
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.233304	0.266667	13.948000
Brunei	Dollar	0.501428	0.573132	29.977700
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000101	0.000116	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.020552	0.023491	1.228700
UAE	Dirham	0.238208	0.272272	14.241200
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.143000	59.784600
Argentina	Peso	0.313020	0.357782	18.713800
Brazil	Real	0.290855	0.332447	17.388600
Denmark	Kroner	0.134648	0.153903	8.049900
India	Rupee	0.018543	0.021195	1.108600
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.230259	0.263186	13.765900
Mexico	New Peso	0.085255	0.097447	5.097000
New Zealand	Dollar	0.498428	0.569703	29.798300
Norway	Kroner	0.126947	0.145100	7.589500
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015163	0.017331	0.906500
South Africa	Rand	0.119971	0.137127	7.172400
Korea	Won	0.000730	0.000834	0.043600
Sweden	Kroner	0.110104	0.125849	6.582500
Syria	Pound	0.020831	0.023810	1.245400
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025249	0.028860	1.509500
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000549	0.000627	0.032800

Trade fair for SMEs

THE AUSTRALIA and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (AnzCham), in cooperation with the American Chamber of Commerce, is holding today an SME trade fair at the NBC Tent in Fort Bonifacio Global City.

The one-day affair is hoped to open opportunities for business networking among clients, SMEs and members of the different chambers.

The trade fair is open to the public.

The fair is the second held by the group. The first held last year was a hit with some 60 exhibitors and more than 400 guests. This year, the AmCham and AnzCham have prepared 100 booths for exhibitors.

Interested parties may visit online www.virtual-asia.com/sme. The trade fair will also feature an auction to spice up the event.

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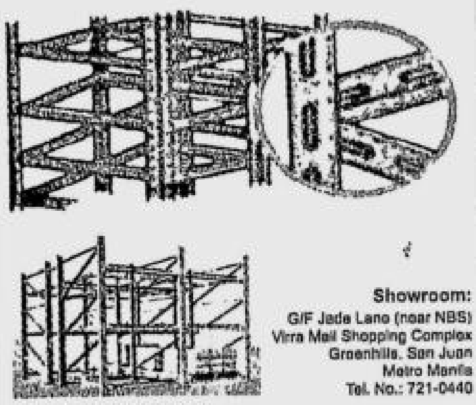

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Construction Project Time Management — May 27-28
Const. Project Contract & Risk Management — June 10-11
Construction Project Management — July 9-11
Construction Project Cost Management — Oct. 21-22

Construction Supervisory Training & Seminars
Construction Safety & Health for Safety Officer (Accredited by the DOLE-Bureau of Working Condition) — May 19-23/ July 14-18
Road Construction — June 3-4
Materials Engineers Course — June 17-20
Rebar Detailing — April 29

Productivity and Quality Seminars
(Supports the Philippine Quality Award)
Value Re-orientation for Service Excellence, Supervisory Development, Cooperation for Productivity & Quality, Quality Control Circles, 5S or Good Housekeeping Practices, ISO 9000 in Construction (Quality Mgmt System), ISO 14000 in Construction (Environmental Mgmt. System) — In company-open for reservation
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For Visayas & Mindanao. Tel (082) 300-9579, look for Jane or Abe

Citystate Savings Bank, Inc.
709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City
Statement of Condition
As of March 26, 2003

ASSETS		AMOUNT:
Cash & Cashitems	P	23,708,004.64
Due From Bangko Sentral		15,115,740.95
Due From Other Banks		30,524,740.14
Interbank Loans Receivable		300,000,000.00
Loans, Discounts & Advances(Net)		428,332,447.77
Available for Sale Sec.-Govt. Others		162,000,000.00
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		13,626,804.08
Equity Investment in Financial Allied Undertakings		399,500.00
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)		101,370,678.16
Other Assets (Net): PropertyOwned/ Acquired		49,417,961.80
Others		79,588,194.01
TOTAL ASSETS	P	1,204,084,161.55
LIABILITIES		
Demand Deposits	P	61,084,792.52
Savings Deposits		627,960,694.98
Time Deposits		-
Due to BSP		400,262.31
Managers Check		10,110,447.85
Accrued Interest, Taxes & Other Expenses Payable		7,643,891.07
Unearnedincome & Other Deferred Credits		801,061.93
Other Liabilities		6,300,670.72
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	714,310,821.18
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS:		
Capital Stock	P	441,000,000.00
Paid-in Surplus		2,222,444.00
Surplus Free		41,573,629.74
Undivided Profits		4,977,266.63
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	489,773,340.37
TOTAL LIABILITIES & CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	1,204,084,161.55
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS:		
Items Held For Safekeeping	P	2,814.00
Items Held As Collateral		505.00
Late Deposits / payments received		42,053.16
Deficiency Claims Receivable		1,434,382.42
Outward Bills for Collections		99,458.96
Outs. Guarantees Issues - Others		1,334,000.00
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	2,913,213.54

COMPLIANCE WITH MAGNA CARTA LAW:

	6% For Small Enterprise	2% For Medium Enterprise
Prescribed Rates of Compliance		
Actual Compliance	102.41%	693.64%

OTHER INFORMATION: (CB Circular208)		
Non-performing loans and Ratio to total Loan Portfolio	P	29,320,604.64 3.93%
Classified loans and other risk assets	P	29,320,604.64
General loan loss reserve	P	1,002,345.69
Specific loan loss reserve	P	11,940,836.33
Return on equity (ROE)		5.39%
DOSRIloans/advances Ratio to total loan portfolio, and	P	10,082,105.68 1.35%
Past due DOSRI loans/advances and ratio to total portfolio		NIL

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Vicente M. Santiago, Jr. — Chairman
Alfonso G. Sly — Vice Chairman
Antonio L. Cabangon-Chua — Director
D. Alfred A. Cabangon — Director
Leow Siak Fah — Director
Leow Tze Wen — Director
Feorelio M. Bote — Director
J. Wilfredo A. Cabangon — Director
D. Arnold A. Cabangon — Director
Godofredo C. Uy-Tioco — Director
Armando C. Trinidad — Director
Benjamin V. Ramos — Director
Anthony Tan — Director
Dr. Ramon L. Sin — Director
Atty. Joaquin T. Venus, Jr. — Director, Corporate Secretary

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS:
D. Alfred A. Cabangon — President
Atty. Rey D. Delfin — Executive Vice President

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
PASIG CITY) S.S.

We, Eduardo O. Olavario and D. Alfred A. Cabangon, solemnly swear that all matters set forth in this report are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief

(Sgd.) EDUARDO O. OLAVARIO
VP - Comptroller

(Sgd.) D. ALFRED A. CABANGON
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 23rd day of April, 2003, affiant exhibiting to me their Residence Certificate No 13384053 issued at Bacoor, Cavite on February 1, 2002 and Residence Certificate No. 19313034 issued at Mandaluyong City on January 23, 2003 respectively.

Doc No. 16
Page No. 4
Book No. 11
Series of 2003

TEODORO D. VILLAPENA, JR.
NOTARY PUBLIC
UNTIL DEC 31, 2003
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US Fed holds interest rates steady at 41-yr low

WASHINGTON—The Federal Reserve, keeping a close eye on the fragile, postwar economy, held a key interest rate steady at a 41-year low Tuesday. But policy-makers opened the door to a possible rate reduction in the future in the event that business conditions take a turn for the worse.

Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan and his Federal Open Market Committee colleagues opted for now to keep the federal funds rate at 1.25 percent. The funds rate is what the interest banks charge each other on overnight loans and is the Fed's primary tool for influencing economic activity.

However, the Fed sent a signal that it stands ready to lower rates.

The Fed identified the greatest risk facing the economy as a further weakening in economic activity.

This stance positions the central bank to reduce the funds rate in an effort to bolster economic growth should the economy show signs of backsliding, economists say. The Fed's next meeting is June 24-25.

At the Fed's previous meeting on March 18, policy-makers said that given all the uncertainties surrounding the Iraq situation at that time, they could not gauge risks on the economy going forward—something they normally do at each meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

"The committee believes that ... the balance of risks to achieving its goals is weighted mainly toward weakness over the foreseeable future," the Fed said.

Holding the funds rate steady means that commercial banks' prime lending rate—the benchmark for many consumer loans—will also remain at 4.25 percent, the lowest level since May 1959.

Both the funds rate and the prime rate, which move in lockstep, were pushed down to their currently low levels on Nov. 6. That marked the Fed's first rate cut of 2002 and its 12th since January of 2001, when the central bank began an aggressive rate-reduction campaign in a bid to rescue a seriously distressed economy.

Tuesday's Fed decision comes as the postwar economy is struggling to get back on firmer footing.

The end of the war in Iraq hasn't produced an economic boom—as some had hoped.

Consumers' confidence in the economy—which had sunk under war worries—rebounded in April, an encouraging sign.

But businesses are wary of big investments in capital spending and in hiring. That's a major factor hurting the economy's ability to get back to full speed.

While the weak state of manufacturing and rising unemployment is disappointing, the Fed said that "the ebbing of geopolitical tensions has rolled back oil prices, bolstered consumer confidence and strengthened debt and equity prices."

President George W. Bush, mindful of the political price his father paid in 1992 for a weak economy, wants Congress to approve another round of tax cuts that he argues would help bolster economic growth and create jobs. *AP*

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An international expert on advanced education and professional development, Dr. Bernal, Has taught at Harvard, Boston Univ. & is currently a professor at U.C.L.A. He has been a Fulbright scholar & a consultant on educational programs for United Nations, U.S. Information Agency & the U.S. National Institutes of Health. Dr. Bernal is a practicing lawyer, an internist, medical oncologist, biotechnologist & a businessman.

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Increase your market value & enhance your knowledge to compete in the global arena

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Physicians, Nurses, Medical Technologists, Midwives, Pharmacists, Physical Therapists, Respiratory Therapists, Radiology Technicians, Dentists, Other health professionals
May 15 – Scientific and Technical Professional Development:
Biologists, Chemists, Pharmacologists, Laboratory technicians, Engineers, Physicists, Mathematicians, Biostatisticians, Agricultural and food scientists, Veterinarians, Computer professionals, Social scientists, Other scientific and technical professionals
May 16 – Legal, Business and Media Professional Development:
Lawyers, Legal assistants & researchers, Accountants, Managers, Advertisers, Marketers, Teachers, Writers, Media and communications professionals, Other professionals

May 13, 15, 16, 2003 at 5:30pm to 8:30. Fort Bonifacio Auditorium, Bonifacio Global City. Php 250.00 per session/pax with refreshments. **Fort Shuttle Bus** at Shell corner McKinley is available. For more information: call **0917-530-6090 or 0917-791-3572**
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US, Singapore ink landmark free trade deal; first in Asia

WASHINGTON—US President George W. Bush and Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong signed a landmark free-trade agreement on Tuesday linking the world's largest economy to the financial hub of Southeast Asia.

At a White House signing ceremony for the pact, the first between the United States and an Asian country, Bush praised Singapore for its strong support of the US invasion of Iraq and its longtime commitment to free trade.

The free-trade pact adds the city-state of 4 million mostly ethnic Chinese to a short list of US free-trade partners that includes just Canada, Mexico, Jordan and Israel.

Goh said he hoped the US-Singapore Free Trade Agreement would quickly lead to additional free-trade pacts between the United States and other countries in Southeast Asia.

Singapore's reasons for wanting to strengthen regional ties with the United States "are even more valid today" than when negotiations began in late 2000, Goh said.

The agreement breaks ground in several areas, including electronic commerce, customs procedures and the protection of copyright material, such as US music, films, software and books that have been a target for pirates around the world.

Singapore is already the United States' 12th largest trading partner, with two-way trade totaling more than $34 billion.

The agreement established Singapore as "probably the most sophisticated trading and investment partner in Asia for American companies," said John Phipps, director of Singapore issue for the US-Asean Business Council.

Singapore officials said the agreement was expected to boost the island nation's economic output by about $500 million, or 0.05 percent, while adding about $700 million to the United States' $10 trillion economy. *Reuters*

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BCDA acquires right of way for ₱18.74-B road project

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE BASES Conversion Development Authority is on track with its plan to finish the P18.739-billion Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway Construction project in three years after completing roughly 70 percent of right-of-way acquisitions.

The project is aimed at cutting travel time between three primary economic zones in Central Luzon—Subic Bay Freeport and Special Economic Zone in Zambales; Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga; and the Luisita Industrial Park in Tarlac—and serve as catalyst for more robust economic activity in the region.

BCDA vice president for operations Rex Antonio Chan said that the government agency has cleared out land for 90 percent of the expressway's Clark to Tarlac segment and more than 50 percent of the Subic to Clark segment.

The right-of-way acquisitions have been cited as the lone major obstacle to the project's completion within three years.

Based on BCDA estimates, the government would have to acquire a total of 536 hectares of land—348 hectares in the Subic-Clark route and 188-hectares in the Clark-Tarlac segment—and relocate 800 families.

BCDA has negotiated with the Luisita Development Corp. for the acquisition of 54 hectares of property at the Tarlac industrial estate while it has started segregation of 66 hectares of government land over four major provinces.

Chan said that the BCDA's contractor—Pacific Consultants International, Nippon Koei Co. Ltd. and Kataira and Engineers International—have fast-tracked all necessary activities over the last few months to ensure the completion of the toll road project by 2005.

Chan said the local government units in Central Luzon have fully supported the ROW acquisitions and have facilitated the negotiations with the affected residents.

BCDA is targeting to start construction of the Clark to Tarlac segment by the second half this year while the Subic to Clark extension would start by March next year.

The highway project involves the construction of a four-lane, 94.5-kilometer continuous highway, three major and 35 minor bridges, 14 major interchanges and 25 underpasses.

The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) has agreed to finance up to 85 percent of the project cost.

NTC dismisses case vs Nextel

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission has dismissed a two-year-old case against trunk radio operator Nextel Communications Phil. Inc., citing lack of jurisdiction on the case.

"The honorable commission, being an administrative agency, has no jurisdiction over the Constitutional and other legal issues raised in the complaint," the order stated.

Lawyers Winston Abuyuan and Alan Paguia had filed separate cases with the NTC against Nextel on charges of violation of the Constitutional cap on foreign ownership of utilities.

They claimed that the company had gone beyond the 40-percent foreign ownership limit that the Constitution allowed in utilities. This was allegedly done through "corporate layering" and the use of "dummy corporations."

Hearings were then held for both cases but the regulatory body dismissed it on May 6 due lack of jurisdiction on the matter.

In a statement issued yesterday, Nextel vice president for legal affairs Justinian Adviento said the NTC decision only confirmed what the company had been saying all along: that it had not violated any law.

He accused former Nextel chief executive Antonio Urera of raising the case "on all possible fora" despite denials of his motions by various courts, including the Court of Appeals.

"Urera even wrote the US Securities and Exchange Commission, which did not even deign to act on his letter," Adviento said.

He added that both the Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission had already issued various opinions stating that firms with the same shareholding structure as Nextel were still considered Filipino.

Nextel was 40-percent owned by US telecommunications firm Nextel International Inc. The companies holding the remaining 60-percent stake in the trunk radio operator also had foreign equity infusions.

But Adviento pointed out that all of those companies, although with some foreign shareholdings, were still considered Filipino firms as they did not breach the 60-40 ownership composition prescribed by the Constitution.

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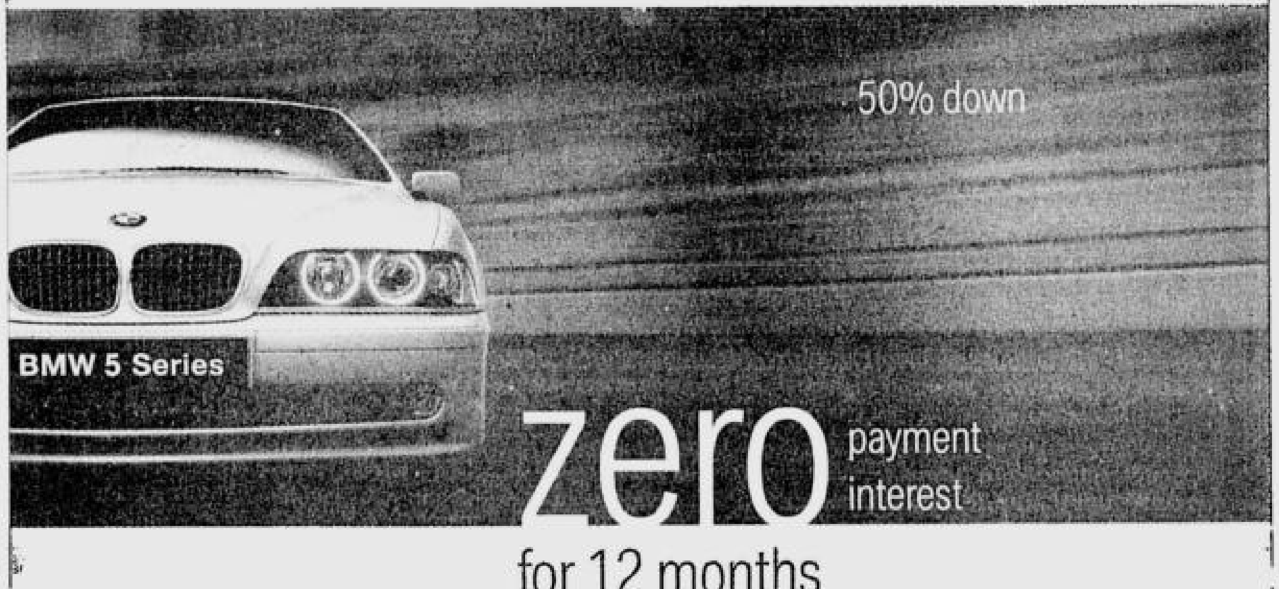

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1684 Series of 2003

Life Underwriters Association of the Philippines

May 8 & 9, 2003 Manila
May 12, 2003 Cebu

CONVENTION 2003

Sanlahi, Sandiwa, Santugon!

The 17th Life Underwriters Association of the Philippines' (LUA-P) Convention 2003 opens today at the Westin Philippine Plaza. The Association, comprising the top professional life insurance agents of the country, reaffirms its commitment to address the concerns of its members and enhance their knowledge and skills in meeting the challenges brought about by the ever-changing financial landscape with this year's convention.

Filipinos unite with their Asian brothers and sisters to rediscover a rich history and cultural heritage shared thru many centuries of meaningful and life-transforming interaction.

"Sanlahi" frames the spirit of this journey of rediscovery, in the knowledge that the same blood flows thru every Asian's vein, uniting us to our foreparents and to one another.

"Sandiwa" seeks to articulate everything that is true, good, and beautiful in the Asian mind or spirit. The emphasis on "diwa" in this year's convention is an attempt to present a roadmap for revolutionalizing the life insurance business. Spirit or "diwa" is life itself. Whatever sustains the spirit is the same thing that *life* should uphold, promote and nurture.

Santugon is literally "one voice... one response". It propels a movement where we hope to identify non-traditional options for charting a better future for the rest of us in ASIA, against the backdrop of fleeting political, financial and now health scenarios. This voice we recognize as emergent from the family, which is the foundation of every Asian society. Hopefully, LUAP can create the energy to sustain the Asian voice, so that in unison it will reverberate the issues and concerns, not only of a Filipino, but of an Asian whose life is centered on the family.

This year, the Association is proud to launch the Asian Circle of Excellence (ACE) Awards.

LUA BOARD OF TRUSTEES INDUCTED IN MALACAÑANG

Front row, (from left) Atty. Rommel D. Trijo (Atty. Of OIC Claims and Adjudication Division), Press Secretary Ignacio Bunyi, Insurance Commissioner Atty Eduardo T. Malinis, Nenita G. Raymundo, Ma Elisa N. Quevada, Alicia Lao O, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Nenette N. Aseniero, Rainelda S. Postrero, Digna B. Lacuanan, Teresita T. Perez, Bella T. Co and Ma. Loida A. Meimban. Second row, (from left) Patricia W. Yam andCynthia L. Miraflor.

The ACE CONCEPT

The Life Insurance industry in the Philippines and Asia Pacific has long had **aces** in its midst. These aces are the best performing partners in the business, the potent resources that propel their respective companies and the industry to unprecedented heights. In fact, they may rightfully form the elite circle of life insurance agents in the Region, except that their fellow Asians have yet to formally accord them the recognition which they deserve.

But today we make history. Asia's best performing life insurance agents, for the first time ever, will take the center stage and inflame us by their examples and extraordinary qualities as leaders and crusaders of life.

LUAP, being also the first to concretize this movement in Asia, has gone through an exciting and rigorous coordinative task of identifying and selecting the *aces* to form the elite Asian Circle of Excellence!

The process required a broad search for some elusive characteristics, that rare combination of professionalism and commitment, of performance and persistence. Surprisingly, the search did not bring us far. It is because the Award is essentially about who we are and what we do, the dreams we build, the families we help to keep whole and the many testimonies to the miracle of life insurance – the gift of life!

In its maiden year, ACE will be presented by the respective insurance firms to 10 select agents within their "smaller circle" according to the standards that the firm has independently drawn. As we mature in this exercise, the vision is to evolve a standard or set of criteria for the entire industry, and hopefully encourage our partners in the Asia-Pacific Region to adopt the Asian Circle of Excellence (ACE) as the new standard of performance for life insurance agents in Asia.

The LUA-P prides itself with its membership in the ASIA PACIFIC LIFE INSURANCE COUNCIL (APLIC)- an organization of eleven national life insurance associations within the Asia Pacific region. APLIC holds biennial conventions, the most recent being in Singapore last February which was attended by 10,000 delegates. The LUA-P sent 1100 delegates to the convention. The APLIC 2005 Convention will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The LUA-P Convention 2003 programme brings together distinguished personalities from the insurance industry and other local and foreign professionals, known for their sterling contribution to their fields of expertise.

They are (in alphabetical order): Vicente Ayllon, CEO Insular Life, Peter Coyiuto, CEO First Guarantee Life, Ma. Antonietta Del Mundo, Hon. Secretary Richard Gordon of Tourism, Manuel Goseco, Josie Gotohio, Mike Handcock of New Zealand, Kohei Hirose, CEO Nippon Life Phil, Joselito Lee, Insurance Commissioner Eduardo Malinis, Ronnie Neo of Singapore, Joaquin Rodriguez, Josefino Sto. Domingo, EVP Philamlife, Ester Tan, Pres. Sunlife Financial Services Phil, Mabel Tecson, Dr. John Tickell of Australia, Efren Yambot, EVP Cocolife and Johnny Young.

To accommodate its members from the Visayas and Mindanao, the LUA-P Chapter in Cebu will host the convention on May 12, Monday, at the Waterfront Hotel, Lahug, Cebu. *(Nenette N. Aseniero)*

Messages

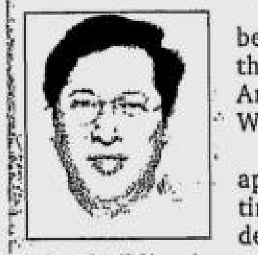
MY warmest felicitations to the men and women of the Life Underwriters Association of the Philippines on the occasion of your Annual LUAP Convention.

For the past few years, we have witnessed the rapid growth of the life insurance industry. This is undoubtedly because of the hard work and dedication of the life underwriters of the country. I, therefore, commend all of you as well as the entire industry, for your unrelenting commitment to improve your financial products and services in response to the changing needs of today's Filipino consumer.

I hope you would remain true to the spirit of professionalism and service. May you continue your active participation in the growth of the life insurance industry as well as our economy. Be our steadfast partner as we participate in the global economy.

Mabuhay!

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines



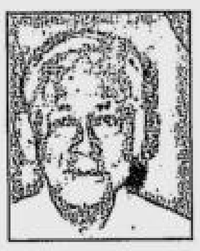
WARM greetings to the officers and members of the Life Underwriters Association of the Philippines on the holding of their 17th Annual Sales Convention on May 8 at the Westin Philippine Plaza.

"Sanlahi, Sandiwa, Santugon!", is a most appropriate conference theme as we continue to chart the path to sustained economic development. The insurance industry's role in nation-building is recognized by the Arroyo administration as one of the impetus for economic growth. In this light, we continue to call on the support and cooperation of the private sector, like the LUAP, in our commitment to achieve our common aspiration for a better life for majority of our people.

As your Association will articulate in your forthcoming conference, "one voice... one response", or Santugon, will be the common spirit that will bind us together, leading us to decide on options that will spell a better and more meaningful future for our nation. In closing, may I wish you a successful conference and hope that LUAP and all the other participants to this event, will be guided by the same spirit and enthusiasm.

Mabuhay!

JOSE ISIDRO CAMACHO
Secretary of Finance



I CONVEY warm felicitations to the Life Underwriters Association of the Philippines on its annual convention. Through the years, LUAP has been at the forefront of the industry's efforts of instilling upon all life insurance practitioners utmost professionalism and espousing a high standard of ethical service to the insuring public.

There is no doubt that the success of its past conventions will be duplicated this year with its theme "Sanlahi, Sandiwa, Santugon!", the only way through the advertisers that we seem to be facing all at the same time, is for us to put our hearts and minds together and work as one nation, one people and one spirit.

Life insurance in our country has a long way to go. The industry has made tremendous strides in recent years, but there is much to be done. Thanks to organizations such as LUAP for providing educational forums that will promote excellence among life insurance professionals as well as instill awareness upon the general public on the value of insurance. Hopefully, this awareness will trickle down to the countryside including our remote barangays and rural communities.

Congratulations and my good wishes for a fruitful convention.

EDUARDO T. MALINIS
Commissioner
Department of Finance

ONCE again, the Life Underwriters Association of the Philippine is holding its annual convention as a firm commitment to the continuing insurance education of our members. "Sanlahi, Sandiwa, Santugon!", this year's theme embraces that every elusive dream of unity in every aspect of Filipino life. One race should evoke one spirit as one spirit translates to one voice. The blood of our forebears that flows in our own veins is our link to the past and our bridge to the future. Oneness of spirit will propel us to strive for success and prosperity in the midst of all the present turmoil and adversity. And, our one voice will be our driving force towards the fulfillment of our aspirations as a nation and as a people.

We can give life and meaning to this theme if we can only set aside our individual interests and keep a steady focus on the common good, the collective welfare of all. For us in the Association, we pledge to do what we do best – enriching the lives of our members by affording them the opportunity to connect with speakers who have inspiring messages, resource persons with unquestioned expertise and motivators with their sharing steep in experiences no different from ours. This, we have committed to our members and this we will give.

Welcome to the 2003 LUAP Convention.

Alicia Lao O
Alicia Lao O, LUTCF
President

MARILES N. QUEVADA,
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PROGRAMME

Day 1 Manila
Thursday
May 8, 2003

8:30 Start of Program / Grand Ballroom
9:00 – 9:05 Invocation / Grand Ballroom
9:05 – 9:10 National Anthem / Grand Ballroom
9:10 – 9:50 Parade of Colors / Grand Ballroom
9:50 – 10:00 Opening Remarks / Atty. Felicisimo Geronimo Jr. / Grand Ballroom
10:05 – 10:05 Welcome Remarks / Alicia Lao O / Grand Ballroom
10:05 – 10:15 Keynote Address / Atty. Eduardo T. Malinis / Grand Ballroom
10:15 – 10:45 Theme Message / Esther C. Tan, CLU, ChFC, FLIMI / Grand Ballroom
10:45 – 11:15 BREAK / none / Grand Ballroom
11:15 – 12:00 My Life's Journey: Enriched by People / Vicente R. Aylion / Grand Ballroom
12:00 – 1:30 LUNCH BREAK / Grand Ballroom
1:30 – 1:45 Association Announcements / Membership Packages / Grand Ballroom
1:45 – 3:15 Kohei Hirose / Grand Ballroom
Understanding Client Personalities / Mike Handcock / Grand Ballroom
3:15 – 3:45 BREAK / Grand Ballroom
3:45 – 5:30 Critical Path to Sales Success / Ronnie Neo / Grand Ballroom
Sec. Richard Gordon / Grand Ballroom
END

DAY 2 MANILA
Friday
May 9,2003

7:00 – 9:00 Asian Circle of Excellence ACE Breakfast/ none / Davao Room
9:15 – 10:15 MDRT Recognition / Grand Ballroom
MDRT Speaker / Ma. Antonietta Q. Del Mundo / Grand Ballroom
007 Secret of Success / Joselito P. Lee / Grand Ballroom
10:15 – 10:45 BREAK / none / Grand Ballroom
10:45 – 12:00 APLIC Presentation / Major Leow Nan Chung / Grand Ballroom
Key Principles of Success / Peter G. Coyuito / Grand Ballroom
FROM ICU to ACE / Juaquin U. Rodriguez / Grand Ballroom
12:00 – 1:30 LUNCH BREAK / none / Grand Ballroom

WORKSHOP

1:30 – 2:30 Starting at Home with your Financial Planning / Manuel Goseco / Room 1
Energy Medicine: Medicine of the Future, the Healthy Option – the Naturopathic
Approach / Mabel Tecson / Room 2
Building and Maintaining a Successful Life Insurance Career the Granum Way / Josie T. Gotohio / Room 3
The Keys to Success / Mike Handcock / Room 4
2:30 – 3:30 Managing Client Expectations / Ronnie Neo / Room 1)
Marketing Life Insurance in the 21st Century / Efren M. Yambot / Room 2
What can Feng shui do for your Business / John C. Young / Room 3
3:30 – 4:00 BREAK / Grand Ballroom
4:00 – 6:00 Family Matters / Mr. and Mrs. Padim Israel / Grand Ballroom
Successful Parenting at Home and in the Workplace / Josefino R. Sto. Domingo / Grand Ballroom
Closing Ceremonies / Grand Ballroom

Cebu
Monday
May 12, 2003

7:00 – 8:00 Registration / Grand Ballroom
8:00 – 9:00 Opening Ceremony / Grand Ballroom
Doxology / Grand Ballroom
National Anthem / Grand Ballroom
Opening Remarks / Alicia Lao O / Grand Ballroom
Welcome Remarks / Amor M. Tomakin / Grand Ballroom
Theme Message / Enrique Dela Cruz / Grand Ballroom
9:00 – 9:30 Keynote Address / Rev. Fr., Labao, SJ / Grand Ballroom
9:30 – 10:10 Understanding Client Personalities / Mike Handcock / Grand Ballroom
10:10 – 10:40 BREAK / Grand Ballroom
10:40 – 11:10 My Life's Journey: Enriched by People / Vicente R. Ayllon / Grand Ballroom
11:10 – 11:40 Discovering your Destiny / Jo Alfafara / Grand Ballroom
11:40 – 12:00 MDRT Talk / Aida Yap/ Grand Ballroom
12:00 – 1:30 LUNCH BREAK / Grand Ballroom
1:30 – 2:10 Managing Client Expectations / Ronnie Neo / Grand Ballroom
2:10 – 2:40 Truth or Lie, Money & Success / Danny Lim / Grand Ballroom
2:40 – 3:00 What can Feng shui do for your Business / Johnny Young / Grand Ballroom
3:00 – 3:30 Successful Parenting at Home and in the Workplace / Josefino R. Sto. Domingo / Grand Ballroom
3:30 – 4:00 BREAK / Grand Ballroom
4:00 – 5:00 Success and Living / Francis Kong / Grand Ballroom
5:00 – 5:10 Closing Remarks / Bert Alvarez / Grand Ballroom
5:10 – 5:30 Closing Ceremonies / Grand Ballroom
5:30 END / Grand Ballroom

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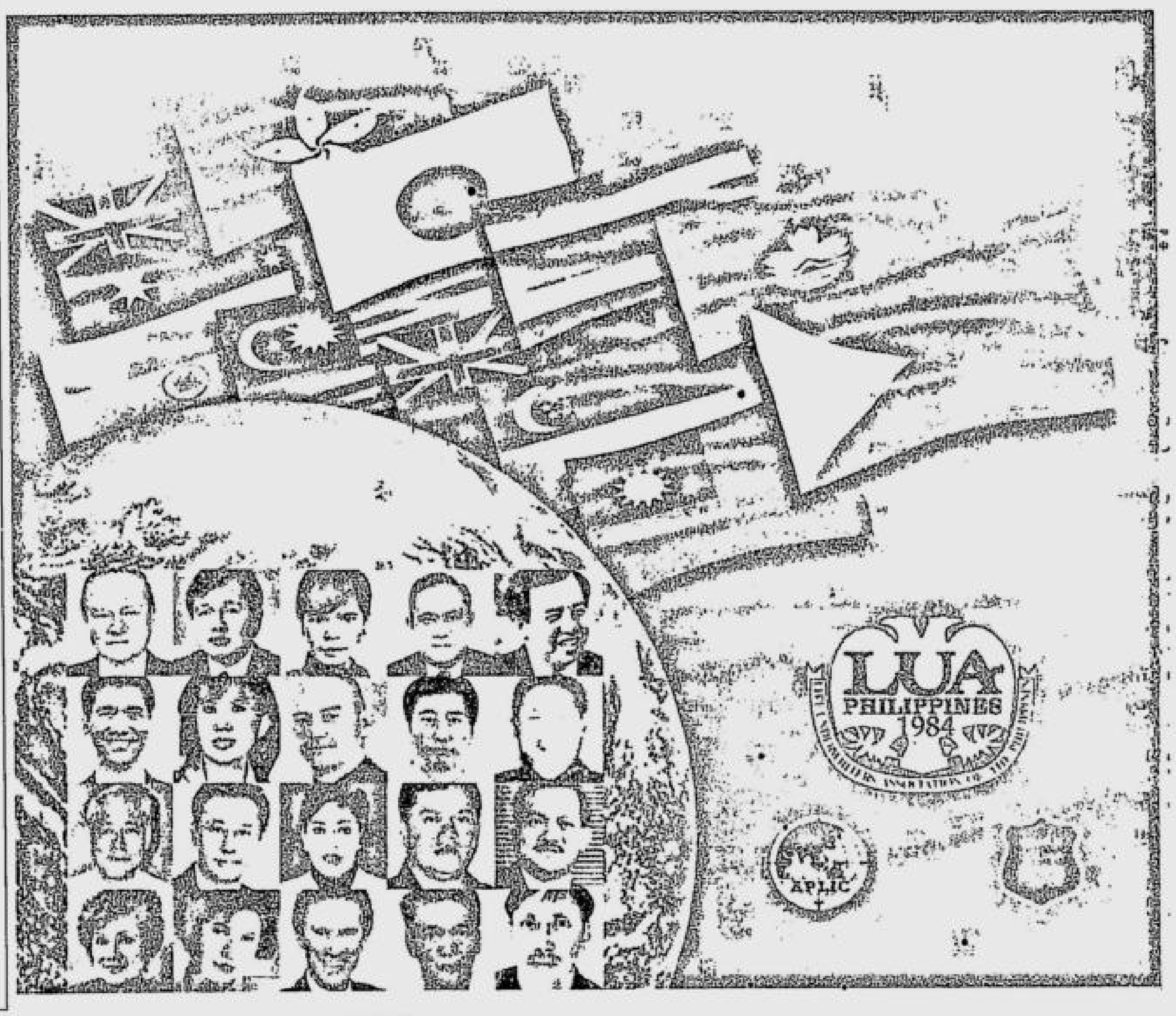
Sanlahi, Sandiwa, Santugon!



Mom always said life is worth living
because it's what we make of it that matters.

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

GSIS releases P20.8 billion for service loan windows

THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System (GSIS) released P20.8 billion for its service loan windows in 2002 which again established the system as one of the institutions, government workers turn to in times of financial need.

Winston F. Garcia, GSIS president and general manager revealed that the system disbursed P15.7 billion for salary loans to its 725,970 members last year. The salary loan is the most popular lending window of the GSIS, thus, it has now an aggregate outstanding loan portfolio of P56.1 billion.

It is during the term of the present GSIS board of trustees that salary loan limits were raised from a maximum of three months to five months and eventually to as much as eight months, regardless of the salary of the GSIS member.

A three-month loan is charged 8 percent interest per annum while a 4 to 8 month loan is charged 12 percent per annum, renewable after payment of six regular monthly installments.

Loans against GSIS members' policies also posted huge increases in 2002 where a total of 3.6 billion was granted to 793,344 regular and optional policy holders. The policy loan portfolio of the system stands at P11.4 billion. Both regular and optional policies are charges 8 percent interest per annum.

Emergency loans granted to 137,983 GSIS members reached P1.16 billion. The loanable amount of emergency loans, which carries an interest rate of 10 percent per annum, was increased from P8,000 to P10,000 payable in two years.

Pension loans, which is processed within 4 hours, also picked up as 18,737 retiree-pensioners took advantage of this new GSIS lending window and borrowed a total of P0.35 billion. A pension loan which amounts to a maximum of 6 times the monthly pension but not more than P100,000 has an 8 percent interest per annum and is payable in one or two years at the option of the borrower.

Garcia said that the GSIS will soon open two new lending windows, the retirement loan and the cash advance loan, to allow GSIS members access to ready cash for their immediate needs. Retirement loan has a funding of P30 billion while the cash advance program has been allotted a P5 billion budget.

"The net income of the GSIS was P34 billion in year 2002. Therefore, it has a very liquid cash position to fund all the loan requirements of its 1.4 million members." Garcia added.

NCWP CELEBRATES NATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH

The National Council of Women of the Philippines (NCWP), an umbrella of women organizations led by commissioner Myrna T. Yao, celebrated the National Women's Month on April 3 at the NCWP Women's Development Center with its annual 'Recognition Day to Outstanding Women'. The event was meant to recognize and celebrate the outstanding achievements of women who continue to promote the cause of women and empower their communities by sharing their gifts and learnings. Guest of honor was Sec. Patricia Sto. Tomas of the Department of Labor and Employment (Dole). During the same event, NCWP entered into a memorandum of agreement with the Dole for NCWP to be given priority assistance in the implementation of the Women Worker's Employment and Entrepreneurship Development (Weed) program. In photo are Charing Villar, Sec. Sto. Tomas, commissioner Yao, Shirley Plaza and Judge Aurora N. Reciña.

OMEGA SPONSORS THE 7TH STA. ELENA CUP

Omega, one of the world's leading names in Swiss timepieces, sponsored the recently concluded 7th Sta. Elena Cup held at the Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club. The successful event was participated in by close to a hundred avid golf players comprised of club members and their respective guests. During the event, Omega raffled off stylish watches to the participants from its extensive line of collections, such as the Seamaster, De Ville Co-Axial, Constellation and the Speedmaster. Over the years, Omega has been closely associated with prestigious sporting events and its unparalleled precision even made it the official timekeeper in a number of Olympic games. Photo shows (from left) Zuellig president Kasigod Jamias, Omega raffle winner Ryan Maclang and Omega brand manager Martin Lacson.

La Corona hotels respond to tourism call

IN LINE with President GMA and Secretary Gordon's emphasis on local tourism, La Corona is promoting three properties, which are found in three important tourist destinations.

Located in the heart of Manila, the Best Western Hotel La Corona Manila is near Luneta Park and Intramuros. The Walled City, having undergone wondrous improvements and restorations, is now bustling with sidewalk cafes and various establishments showcasing the crafts and products from various regions of the country.

Intramuros and Luneta are within walking distance from the Best Western Hotel La Corona. Aside from having the amenities of a 3-star boutique hotel, La Corona Manila is a convenient 30-minute drive to the international airport. This is also an excellent vantage point for viewing the world famous Manila Bay sunset.

Meanwhile, Laguna beckons with its Pagsanjan falls. The idyllic setting is also an attraction to local showbiz as this is the venue for the local TV show Tabing-Ilog. An exciting boat ride through the rapids highlights the visit of tourists to Pagsanjan.

The second property, Hotel La Corona de Pagsanjan has 35 cottages: garden landscapes set amidst a sprawling 3.5 hectares. It also offers its guests access to boat rides going to Pagsanjan falls. After braving the rapids, guests can wind down in the swimming pool; play basketball, volleyball or badminton. For serious fun, team-building and corporate seminars, the rope "challenges" course offers an excellent challenge.

The cooler temperature of Lipa provides an ideal setting for the third property. Hotel La Corona de Lipa is conveniently located near the dynamic city of Batangas. Hotel La Corona de Lipa is a one-stop entertainment hotel with its two newly opened outlets - Caffeine Plus Coffee Shop and Restaurant, and Music Zone Videoke Bar. Adequately equipped with audio-visual equipment, the function rooms are also perfect for corporate bookings such as strategic planning, staff meetings and workshops.

Whether it's in the heart of Manila, by the Pagsanjan rapids or in cool and refreshing Lipa, the best choices to stay in these beautiful tourist spots are in the La Corona hotels.

NEW BARS JOIN MILD SEVEN

The 2003 Mild Seven Bar Tour continues to make waves after a month on the road. This is shown by the ever-increasing number of participating bars. Mild Seven launched its Metro-wide bar tour in February with 14 of the most popular nightspots on its roster. Since then, the Mild Seven Bandwagon has grown to almost 100 outlets. One of the newest bars to join the Mild Seven bar tour is Tequila Joe's. Located in Glorietta 4, this popular nightspot also boast the widest array of tequila products available in one bar here in Metro Manila. Last weekend's Mild Seven bar tour made pit-stops at Congo Grill, Gerry's Grill, Giligan's Island, Cable Car, Peps, Flute, Decades and Club V. The Saturday bar seen was made more exciting when Mild Seven's team visited Aresi, Dencio's, Congo Grill, Packo's, Ten Years After, East St. Louis, Cafea and Salo. Mild Seven uses a unique dual filter technology, is available in Metro Manila and Metro Cebu.

ProductFILES

Gardenia-Jollijeep launched at Makati CBD

Gardenia is now available in the Makati CBD Mobile Food Stalls (Jollijeeps). In support of the 'Makati Makatao' drive of the city, this world-class bread is now readily available for on-premise consumption or take home to the thousands of the Makati working class that patronize the Jollijeeps everyday. Shown in photo is one of the mobile food stalls to sell Gardenia breads.

ROTARY GSE REPS OFF TO AUSTRALIA

The Rotary Club District 3370 presented its five official representatives to the Group Study Exchange (GSE) program in Perth, Western Australia during its annual district conference in Baguio City. This year's GSE batch is composed of (from left) public official Dennis Carlos (Meycauyan, Bulacan); educators Carlo Vadil (Nueva Vizcaya) and Rose Bajan (Tuguegarao City); top marketing executive Vince Reyes (Calumpit, Bulacan); and forester Jaime Venturina Jr. (San Ildefonso, Bulacan). Also in photo is GSE leader, Rotary past district governor Boy Valle Jr. (third from left). The GSE is a 6-week educational program of the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, which aims to promote international understanding through an exchange of study teams composed of young professionals between paired districts in different countries. The Philippine group will be privileged to learn, immerse themselves in the culture, as well as establish further camaraderie with their Rotarian counterparts in Australia.

TMHC CSS KAIZEN EKIDEN MEETING

The Toyota CSS/Kaizen Ekiden Meeting, a series of seminars discussing the global network of Toyota customer support and services, was held in Nagoya, Japan last Dec. 11 to 13. Toyota distributors all over the world were invited. Philippine Forklift Center Inc., the exclusive distributor of Toyota Industrial Equipment in the Philippines, was represented by president Rita A. Calanoc, accompanied by Dr. Antonio Ma. Calanoc, exec. vice president Julius P. Nazareno and service manager Anthony R. Bautista. It was such an informative / educational approach on customer support focused on customer is king. This is part of Toyota's vision for continuous innovations on warehouse improvement/maintenance, re-shaping the workplace, the design of modern tools, in its quest for 'quality service to none.'

Clips

Ogie Alcasaid in Casino Filipino Mimosa

PAGCOR, PJI, Jobs DB in cooperation with Greenwich Nepo Mall will present Ogie Alcasid Live in Concert on May 9 at 9 p.m. Guest artists are hilarious John Lapus and sexy singer Viktoria under the direction of Al Marcelo. Ticets are available at SM Ticketnet and Casino Filipino Mimosa.

2003 Summer Art workshop

CHRIST the King Parish in Greenmeadows, Quezon City and the Postivism Art Gallery will conduct the 2003 summer art workshop for children (three to 12 years old) and adults (13 and above) with focus on portraiture, caricature, fashion and figure illustration, still life and landscape paintings. The twice a week workshop (Tuesday and Thursday) will start tomorrow from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Formation Center, Christ the King Parish to be conducted by positivism exponent and painter E.R. Tagle. For inquiries, call 899-6358 and 09179726223.

24th Philippine Furniture Festival opens

THE 24TH Philippine Furniture Festival 'Barely Summer' opens May 9 with Ms Mila Drilon, wife of Senate President Franklin Drilon, leading the opening and ribbon cutting ceremonies at the Megatrade Hall, SM Megamall. The furniture fest, organized by the Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines (CFIP), runs until May 18 at the Megatrade Hall, SM Megamall and Carousel Court, Festival Supermall, Alabang. The show, which is open free to the public, will once again gather the country's best and most creative furniture manufacturers and exporters for a 10-day furniture extravaganza. The show is organized to give the public a chance to buy exquisite furniture destined for the world's middle to high-end market at reduced prices.

The many voices of May

PACO Park Presents features a host of talented artists this May. 'Voice to Voice' on May 9 presents the singing duo - tenor Ronan Ferrer and soprano Nenen Espina with pianist Mary Ann Espina. On May 16, soprano Erica Maier from the UST Conservatory of Music is the artist in focus. The NBI Chorale marks a celebration with an array of songs on May 23. Making beautiful music together for an enchanting evening on May 30 are three talented artists in a program dubbed as 'The Flute, the Piano and the Voice' led by the country's noted flutist Sonny Yangco. Admission to Paco Park Presents is free of charge, every Friday at 6:00 p.m. The public is cordially invited.

Wiloci to honor its outstanding members

THE UP Women Lawyer's Circle (Wiloci) will honor five of its outstanding members at a testimonial program set at 4 p.m. tomorrow, at the Manila Golf Club in Forbes Park, Makati City. The honorees are lawyers Pacita de los Reyes Phillips and Lourdes Lontok Cruz who will be the recipients of the Karilagan Award, to be presented by Supreme Court Justice Consuelo Ynares Santiago, Supreme Court Justice Amor Melencio Herrera and Wiloci president Ma. Teresita C. Sison. The other honorees who will receive the Awards of Distinction are International Judge Lolita C. Dumlao, Court of Appeals Justice Rosmari Declaro Carandang and Sandiganbayan Presiding Judge Minita Chico Nazario. They will be introduced by Teresita Mortola Villaruz and Congresswoman Bella Angara Castillo. The 53 year old Wiloci is a professional, civic and non-profit organization composed exclusively of women law graduates of the University of the Philippines. It was founded by the late Justice Corazon Juliano Agrava 'to help the poor and the oppressed women to receive love and compassion and justice' through the Wiloci's Legal Aid Center; and to assist them live useful worthwhile and happy lives.

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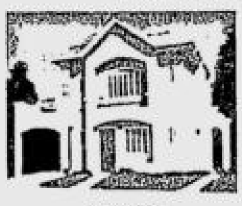

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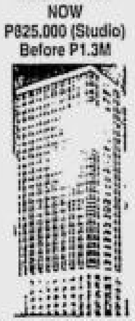

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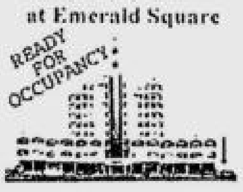

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NATION PAWNSHOP, INC., Poblacion, Meyc. Bulacan will auction unredeemed pledges of Nov. 2, '02 on May 21, '03 10am. Lanuza & Sons-Auctioneer.

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

The public is notified that the Intestate Estate of Deceased Publio M. Hernandez has been extra-judicially settled by the heirs under Deed of Extra-Judicial Settlement dated May 2, 20003 identified in the Notarial Register of Atty. Roel Costuna as Doc. No. 265; Page No. 53; Book No. I; Series of 2003 (PDI-May 8, 15 & 22,2003)

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Deadline of materials is on May 23, 2003. Please send all materials in jpeg format.

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TESDA
Technical Education & Skills Development Authority

ERRATUM

In the ad of TESDA (Technical Education & Skills Development Authority) Re: Ad for their Valued Clients and to the General Public published in this paper May 7, 2003 that "A. All ARBs form serial number 54000 to 54000" should be

A. All ARBs form serial number 54000 to 54999.

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Monday to Sunday
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Day before publication

Prov. 31:10,30 - Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies... A woman who feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

Our dearly beloved

CRISPINA LORENZANA MACAGBA, MD

UP College of Medicine 1932
co-founder, Lorma Medical Center, Colleges, and Community Health and Development Foundation; RN&CL Macagba Realty
first woman medical doctor of Ilocos; church, community, civic leader widow of Rufino N. Macagba Sr., MD

Peacefully joined her Creator and Lord
on 6 May 2003 at the age of 101.

Her children **Rufino Jr.** and **Victoria Macagba**, **Lilian** and **Petros** (†) **Toundjis**, **Florence** and **Alfredo Tadiar**, **Josephine** and **Leo Agustin**, **Gena** and **Lemuel Ignacio**, **Emma** and **Robert Kaiser**; grandchildren and great grandchildren, praise and thank God for the love she had given and the life of prayer she had shown them and many others.

She lies in state at the Lorma Chapel, San Fernando City, La Union.

Interment will be on Sunday, 11 May 2003, at 3:30 p.m.

Donations to her Scholarship Fund through the Lorma Community Development Foundation will be appreciated, instead of flowers.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me. All their joys of my life;
and I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever...
Psalms 41:13

IN LOVING MEMORY

On the 1st Death Anniversary
of our Dearly Beloved

ROSARIO "BABY" RODRIGUEZ REYES

Who passed away in the Grace of Our Lord on May 08, 2002

With a final gift of the God given reunion of all the members of her loving family in Boston, Massachusettes, U.S.A.

Beloved Spouse : **FLORENCIO "TOTOY" E. REYES, JR.**

Loving Children & Grandchildren :
RACHAEL AURORA "SUYIN", and **IRWIN ANSHER** - Lisalou, & Daniel
PAMELA "SIRIKIT", and **CHITO BANSON** - Karah, Kamille, & Tony
ROSEMARIE "SORAYA", and **BENISON CHUA** - Cathy, Benny Jr. & Joshua
FLORENCIO EULOGIO "SUHARTO", and **RINA SILANG** - Florencio V (Quinto)
RAFAEL "SIHANOK" RODRIGUEZ REYES
SALUD "SHEBA" and **MICHAEL BAUTISTA** - Seth, & Gabe

Holy Masses will be offered at the following churches:

Divine Word Missionary Seminary, (Christ the King), Quezon City	6:00 PM
Carmel of St. Therese, Quezon City	6:30 AM
Mary the Queen Parish, San Juan	6:00 PM
Mount Carmel Shrine, Quezon City	6:00 PM
Shrine of Mary Queen of Peace, (Our Lady of EDSA, Mandaluyong City)	6:30 AM
Immaculate Conception Parish, Quezon City	6:00 PM
National Shrine of our Lady of Lourdes, Quezon City	7:30 AM
Santuario De San Jose, East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City	7:15 AM & 6:15 PM

The Family and relatives of the deceased, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

DR. FELIX M. DIAZ

of Bulan, Sorsogon

Died on May 5, 2003 at the age of 78.

He is survived by his wife **BETTY**; children **CHERYL, AGNES, JANE, & AL, DARRYL & CLARIZ, FRANCIS**; grandchildren **ALEC & MATTHEW**.

His remains lie in state at Zone 4, Bulan, Sorsogon.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 10, 2003 at the Bulan Catholic Cemetery.

His family request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

LAURA T. SULIT

widow of **CLARO Y. SULIT**
both of Bauan, Batangas

passed away peacefully on May 6, 2003
at the age of 76.

Her children **HELEN & JESS CIFRA, GERRY & FE, GLENDA & SONNY ROSALES** and **JOYCE & JHOMBET BUENDIA**; grandchildren **ANDRÉ, MARC & DON; CEEJAI; JUSTIN & JEFFREY**; and **JULIBET & JDEE**; brother- and sisters-in-law **RIC & JOSIE SULIT, ONIANG SULIT** and **LESTIE SULIT** and other relatives request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Mount Carmel Shrine Parish, Doña Juana Rodriguez corner Fourth Streets, New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, May 11, 2003 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 8:30 a.m. Mass at the Mount Carmel Shrine Parish.

In Loving Memory
on the 9th Death Anniversary of

ISAIAS P. DIMAYA

Who joined his Creator on May 8, 1994

His family requests relatives, friends and the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul and to remember him always in their prayers.

Holy Masses will be offered in his memory at the following churches:

Mt. Carmel Church Laoag City	May 8, 6:30 AM
Lourdes Church Quezon City	May 8, 6:30 AM
Immaculate Conception Parish Church 7211 West Talcott Avenue Chicago, Illinois, 60621	May 8, 6:30 AM
St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church Scott Road, Burbank, California	May 8, 6:45 AM
Sto. Domingo Parish Church Quezon Ave., Quezon City	May 8, 8:00 AM

So Lovingly Remembered
So Dearly missed

On Her First Death Anniversary

LOURDES FRIAS BAYATON

(July 21, 1911 - May 9, 2002)
of Sta. Ana, Manila & Toronto, Canada

Holy Masses will be offered tomorrow, May 9 at the following churches:

Our Lady of the Abandoned, Sta. Ana, Manila	5:30 AM
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, Montalban, Rizal	6:00 AM 6:00 PM
De La Strada, Katipunan, Quezon City	6:00 AM 6:00 PM
St. Michael Parish, Orani, Bataan	7:00 AM
Sta. Teresita, Mayon, Quezon City	7:00 AM
Our Lady of Lourdes, Kanlaon, Quezon City	7:30 AM
Precious Blood, Toronto, Ontario, Canada	8:00 AM
On Monday, May 12	
St. Agustine, Daly City, San Francisco, California	8:45 AM
On Thursday, May 15	
St. Gabriel, Windsor, Ontario, Canada	8:30 AM

Her Family request relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Our Dearest Papa

2LT VIRGILIO B. ROBANG, PAF (Ret.)

(September 1, 1936 to May 6, 2003)
Peacefully joined our Lord on May 6, 2003 at the age of 66.

His loving wife Cirila; children Cynthia (†), Rogelio, Robert and Ma. Cecilia; children-in-law Angela, Melane and Victor; grandchildren Alice, Agnes, Andrea, Mary Rose, Margarette Carmela, Vincent Christian, Victor Chadwick and Virgil Charles, and relatives request friends, colleagues and all who know Virgilio to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Our Lady of All Nations Parish, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City.

Interment will be on 11 May, 2003 at 1:30 p.m.
at the Golden Haven Memorial Park,
Las Piñas City.

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INTERMENT NOTICE

Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
PABLO WENCESLAO	May 09	10:00 A.M.	Holy Gardens Greenhills Memorial Park Calamba City	Camp Vicente Lim, Mayapa Calamba City
IGMIDIO NATIVIDAD	May 09	10:00 A.M.	Holy Gardens Greenhills Memorial Park Calamba City	Siranglupa Calamba City
RHODORA REYES	May 08	2:00 P.M.	Holy Gardens Greenhills Memorial Park Calamba City	B8 L17 Lanzones St., Cens III Canlubang Laguna

www.holygardens.com
E-mail address: sales@holygardens.com

In Loving Memory
On the Thirty Second Death Anniversary of

DR. BIENVENIDO B. ERAÑA

Holy Masses were offered last Tuesday, May 6, 2003 at the following churches:

SANTO DOMINGO Church, Quezon City	6:00 a.m.
SHRINE OF MARY, Queen of Peace, EDSA, Q.C.	6:30 a.m.
SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO, Forbes Park, Makati	7:30 a.m.
MANILA METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL, Intramuros, Manila	7:30 a.m.
MT. CARMEL SHRINE, J. Rodriguez, New Manila, Q.C.	6:00 p.m.

We, his family, express our thanks to relatives and friends who joined us in our prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love Him.

I Corinthians 2:9

OBITUARIES

Message of Thanks

In our time of sorrow and hour of grief...
YOU WERE THERE

Thank you
for visiting us & being with us;
for praying with us and for us;
for the beautiful flowers to express compassion;
for attending the funeral rites
Thank you for all that you have done
to console our hearts.

Our sincerest gratitude

From the children and children-in-law BENJAMIN (†) & JUANITA, PERFECTO & LORNA, SOFIO & ALEJANDRA, DAVID & CELY, CONCEPCION & ANTONIO, GLORIA, ERLINDA and BETTY; grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren; relatives and friends of the late

SIA SIU TUAN vda. de TIU

(LIM SY)

Who peacefully joined her Creator on the 4th of April 2003.

FLORENCIA F. FELICIANO

of Magalang, Pampanga
February 23, 1912 - May 5, 2003

Peacefully joined her Creator at the age of 91.

Her husband **Lamberto P. Feliciano** (†); children **Benny** (†) and **Marita**, **Bro. Benildo Feliciano, FSC**, **Lumen** and **Emy Ortiz**, **Vic** (†) and **Lynda** (†), **Sister Mary Vincent Feliciano, OSB**, **Sito** and **Rose** and **Luz** (†), **Dary** and **Cecille**, **Bong** and **Rod Salazar**, **Boi** and **Nati**, **Suki**, **Chary** and **Mike Jose'**, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the National Shrine of the Divine Child at La Salle Greenhills, Ortigas Ave., Mandaluyong.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 10, 2003 at the La Loma Catholic Cemetery after the 9 a.m. Mass at La Salle Greenhills.

SALVACION BONOAN-DIMAYA

Peacefully joined our Lord
on May 6, 2003 at the age of 102.

"Lola, your presence will be deeply missed, but the memories of your love will remain in our hearts forever."

Your children Hamilton and Caridad, Naty (†); grandchildren Helen, Ruth, Thelma, Butch, Susan and Sonny, Jun and Angie, Sosimo and Stella, Romeo, Grace, Oliver, Ferdinand and Leslie; great grandchildren request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe.

Interment will be on Saturday, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

SALVADOR BUTALID DRILON

Joined his Creator on May 6, 2003

His bereaved wife MARING; children MARGIE, JUN & VINA, MARSAL & BABETTE, VICKI & TOM; sisters TELING, GLORIA & NORA; brother RANING; in-laws; grandchildren, nephews & nieces request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel A of Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at the Loyola Memorial Park,
Sucat, Parañaque.

" In my Father's house there are many dwelling places;
I am indeed going to prepare a place for you that
where I am you also may be." (John 14:1-3)

JOHN D' AUTHREAU

(Former Director of Jardine Davies Co.)
Peacefully joined his Creator
on February 2, 2003.

His beloved wife **Lagrimas Seva d' Authreau**; and children **Seanna & Peter Brooks**, **Lilo & William Garne** request the pious readers especially those whose lives he touched to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains was buried in Guadalmar, Spain.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

- **OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:**

❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Our Dearly Beloved

JOVITA (PITANG) TIONGSON ENRILE

Peacefully returned to her Creator
on May 6, 2003 at the age of 95.

Her loving children **AURING**, **DING & BABY**, **MARA**, **JUNIOR & CONNIE**, **JUN & ELVIE**; grandchildren and great grandchildren request you to pray for the repose of her soul.

May she find eternal rest in the company of her husband **FELIX SR.**, her children **BOY & ROGER**; grandchildren **TONTON**, **RAMON & JON**.

Her remains lie in state at the Christ the King Parish Church, Greenmeadows, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, May 11, 2003 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Christ the King.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:39

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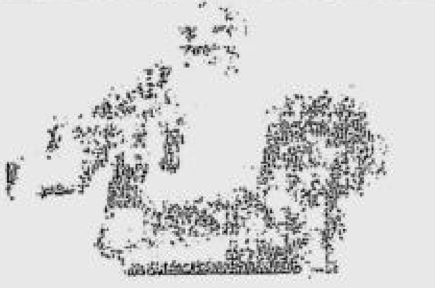
Mother's Day Treat



Warm your mom's heart with your deeply felt love note telling her how special she is to you.

On **May 11, Mother's Day, INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS,** the widest reaching classifieds, will highlight a *"Mother's day special section"* for personal ads dedicated to the first woman in all our lives.

Nanay Margie,

There's never been a minute I wasn't glad you were my mom.

Lulli Boy

1 col x 5 cm = ₱500

Mom Junie,
You're the best!

JM & Hamma

1 col x 2 cm = ₱100

Nanay Karen,

Thanks for all you do.

Mico, Nicole, Gabby AJ & Christian

1 col x 3 cm = ₱250

Mommy Lita,

Thank you for always helping us to remember what is important in life... and today it is YOU!

Happy Mother's Day!

Irah, Basti & Pauline

2 col x 8 cm = ₱1,500

Mommy Tess,

If there was a day for everything you have given me as a mother, It would be Mother's day everyday.
I love you very much!

Chris

2 col x 5 cm = ₱1,000

Mama Rita,

Thank you for always being there, Mama. Happy Mother's Day!

Kobe & Niki

[illegible] col x 3 cm = ₱500

Take advantage of this offer and this will surely be one of the BEST gifts your mom will ever receive and cherish. For more info, you may visit or call any Inquirer branch.

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Third Elementary Education Project

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Loan No. : 4108-PH
IFB Title : Supply and Installation of a Local Area Network
IFB No : PISU-CO/252002

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development toward the cost the Third Elementary Education Project and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of Loan to payments under the agreement(s) resulting from this IFB for the supply and installation of a Local Area Network.
2. The Department of Education now invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders for the supply and installation of a local area network inclusive of:
    - One year on-site maintenance.
    - Three years' hotline/online support.
    - Three years parts and labor warranty (on-site).
    - User application training (internet, email, use of shared servers etc.).
    - Training for system maintenance, administration, troubleshooting, report creation and management.
3. Bidding will be conducted using the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedures specified in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits* and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines* that meet the following minimum qualification stipulated in Section II. Bid Data Sheet, Instructions to Bidders (ITB) Clause 6.1 (a).
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Department of Education and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below:
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested Bidders on the submission of a written application to the address given below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Philippine Peso Three Thousand (PHP 3,000.00) or its equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. The method of payment will be in cash or cashier's/manager's check. The document will be available for collection by the bidders representative or, in the case of an international firm, sent by a reputable international courier on receipt of an additional payment of Philippine Peso Two Thousand (PHP 2,000.00) or its equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. **A complete set of Bidding Documents is available starting April 30, 2003.**
6. Bids must be delivered to the address shown below on or before 10:00 AM on **June 11, 2003.** All bids must be accompanied by a bid security equivalent to 2.5% of the total bid price. Late bids will be rejected.
7. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 10:00 AM, local time, on **June 11, 2003**, at the Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, Department of Education, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines, Tel. No. (+632) 632-1361 local 2115 Telefax (+632) 636-6539. Pre-bid conference will be held on **May 14, 2003**, 10:00 AM at the venue mentioned above.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Undersecretary

(PDI – May 3, 5 & 8, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agrarian Reform
Provincial Agrarian Reform Office
B.S. Aquino Jr. Ave., Baliuag, Bulacan

NOTICE OF CARP COVERAGE

Pursuant to Section 7 of Republic Act No. 6657, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988, notice is hereby given that landholdings listed below are now covered by Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

NAME OF LANDOWNER	LOCATION OF PROPERTY	TITLE NO./ ASP NO.	AREA (HAS.)
1. Onazus Realty Dev. Corp.	Sibul, San Miguel Bulacan	RT-111110 111111 111112 111109	5.5120 7.2421 5.2579 6.4880
2. LGM Farms Inc.	Maligaya, San Miguel Bulacan	T-272455 272464 272436 272465	2.7225 9.9746 4.8531 6.8236
3. Rogelio Lugos	Sapang Bulac, DRT, Bul.	RT-5611	9.9999
4. Crisostomo delos Reyes	Talbak DRT Bulacan	T-252608	7.3267
5. United Plaza Realty Corp.	Kalawakan, DRT Bulacan	T-25717 -29236 29235	16.9584 5.8633 10.5024
6. Sps. Jose Eustaquio & Primitiva Pascual	Bangkal, Norzagaray Bulacan	0-5400	0.6544
7. Agro-Industrial Corp.	San Mateo, Norz. Bulacan	T-156601 156604 156607	18.3478 1.2960 1.3565
8. Ma. Rosario N. Moreno	Paradise III SJDM, Bulacan	T-9924P(M)	21.7490
9. Gregorio Custodio c/o Guy Rafael Custodio	Calumpang, San Miguel Bulacan	RT-52929-A (T-193957)	8.0000

In view thereof, we wish to invite affected parties to contact our Municipal Agrarian Reform Office (MARO) of:

A. MARO San Miguel Bul	San Jose, San Miguel, Bulacan
B. MARO DRT	Municipal Compound, DRT, Bulacan
C. MARO Norzagaray	Poblacion, Norzagaray, Bulacan
D. MARO, San Jose del Monte	City Hall Cpd., City of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan

within thirty (30) days after this publication.

Landowners have the right to retain and select an area in accordance with Sec. 6 R.A. 6657 which are more or less contiguous.

Failure to contact the aforesaid MAROs within the prescribed period will mean that authority has been left to us for the identification of said landholdings.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. GITA**
OIC-PARO

(PDI–May 8, 2003)

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES LOS BAÑOS
College, Laguna

INVITATION TO BID

The University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) invites interested parties to submit sealed bids for the public bidding of Boom Truck for the Physical Plant Maintenance Services Office (PPMSO) and Steam Sterilizer for Biotech with approved budget of 2.2M and 2M.

Interested parties may secure bid documents and the checklist of the qualification requirements from Supply and Property Management Office (SPMO).

The schedule of the bidding activities is as follows:

Particulars	Date/Time	Place
Issuance of Bid Documents	May 19-21/8:30 am-5:00 pm	SPMO
Pre-Bid Conference	May 26, 2003, Mon./10:00 am	SPMO
Opening/submission of bids	June 9, 2003, Mon./10:00 am	SPMO

Bidders shall submit two (2) sealed envelopes containing a) TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS (e.g. qualification requirements indicated in the checklist, bid security as to form, amount and validity period, authority of signatory, after sales service/parts, catalogues/brochures/other literatures, etc.); and b) FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS at the Supply and Property Management Office, UPLB.

The UPLB reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect therein and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the UPLB. The UPLB likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made

(Sgd.) **TERESITA M. ESPINO**
Chair, BAC

(PDI–May 8 & 16, 2003)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON GOOD GOVERNMENT
IRC BUILDING #82 EDSA
MANDALUYONG CITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO REBID

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), Region 8, invites interested parties to participate in the sealed bidding for the lease of the ground floor of the People's Center and Library located at Real St., Tacloban City as venue for "Summer Trade Exhibit" from **May 15, 2003 to July 15, 2003.**

The bidding guidelines will be available at PCGG Office, Asset Management Department, 3rd Floor, IRC Building, 82 EDSA Mandaluyong City and at the PCGG Regional Office, Nipa Hut, Jones St., Tacloban City, until **May 8, 2003**. For inquiries, please contact Darwin C. Altea at Telephone No. 726-0034 and Renor O. Dauag at Telephone No. (053) 321-3413.

Pre-qualification requirements should be submitted on or before **May 8, 2003**, while bids will be received, opened and tabulated at 10:00 A.M. on **May 9, 2003** in the presence of the bidders at the PCGG Office, Asset Management Department, 3rd Floor, IRC Building, 82 EDSA, Mandaluyong City.

(Sgd.) **RENOR O. DAUAG**
Regional Representative

(PDI--May 6, 7 & 8, 2003)

Philippine Association of Religious Treasurers

Inviting all TREASURERS, General, Provincial & Local Members of Religious Congregations

SEMINAR ON FINANCIAL PRIORITIES

Discussion Includes:
✓ Establishing a Clear Financial focus
✓ Ensuring Financial Integrity through proper control
✓ Accountability with appropriate consequences promotes Financial effectiveness
✓ Resourcing your Resources
✓ Communication spells the difference in Financial Planning
✓ Strategic Long-term Planning

When & Where
May 9 & 10, 2003
Don Bosco Hall
Don Bosco Technical Institute
Makati City

Participation Fee:
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Come & Join this occasion. Surely you will benefit from it!

RSVP
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Tel # 8990066
Cel# 09187283942

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

SAM!

LOVE FROM THE PEOPLE
WHOSE LIVES YOU'VE TOUCHED,

S.A.M.

(SONY, ASTRUD, MAE)

UNI-PRESIDENT (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION

NOTICE OF SPECIAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Please be notified that there shall be a Special Stockholders' Meeting of **UNI-PRESIDENT (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION** to be held on 30 May 2003, Friday, regarding the dissolution of the corporation at 10 00 a.m. at its principal office at Unit-2004A, East Tower, PSE Center, Exchange Road, Ortigas, Pasig City, to discuss the following agenda:

I. Call to Order
II. Proof of Notice / Certification Of Quorum
III. Ratification of a Board Resolution resolving to Voluntarily Dissolve the Corporation
IV. Other Matters
V. Adjournment

(Sgd.) **LORNA PATAJO-KAPUNAN**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI--May 1, 8 & 15, 2003)

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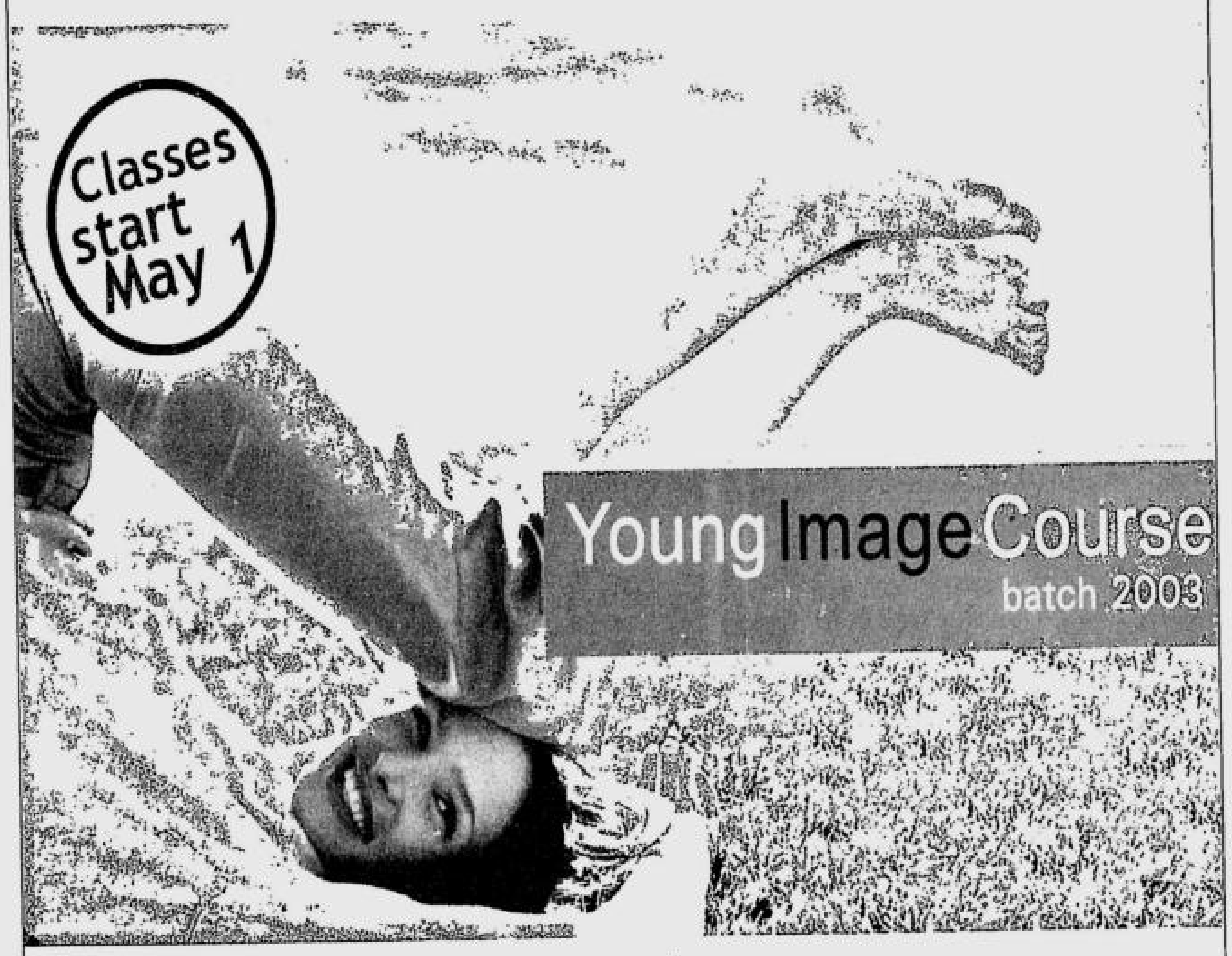

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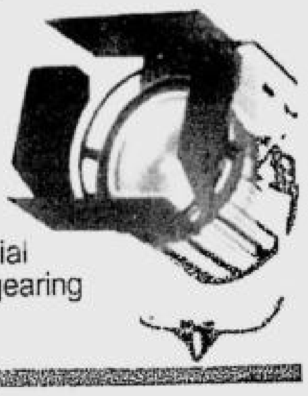
May 13-15, 2003 • 8am-6pm • Hotel Intercontinental Manila

The Advertising Suppliers Association of the Philippines (ASAP), the professional organization of production houses and services, invites you to a 3-day symposium and seminars on trends in advertising. Now on its 25th year, ASAP offers a diverse line-up of topics to be presented by noted panelists from various creative outfits and other industries.

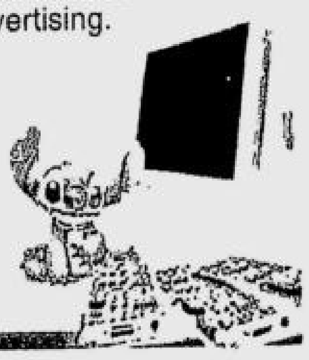


DAY 1 – Symposium (Plenary)

Get an insight on trade practices standards, intellectual property rights, television commercial production "Pinoy-style" and Filipinos gearing towards Globalization.

DAY 2 – TV Commercial Production Seminar

Learn the TV commercial production process overview and budget from concept to casting up to state-of-the-art of TVC production and non-traditional advertising, as well as mobile advertising.



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Focus on the latest in animation, digital photography, talent casting, excellent advertising, sound design and live sound recording.

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For more information on details and cost, please contact:
ASAP Secretariat office at 893-0564 / 893-0738 or
the Symposium & Seminar Committee office at 899-6095 / 899-2565

Visit the ASAP website:
www.asapmanila.org

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MOTORING

E-mail: pr_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Vehicle protection goes beyond seat belts, air bags

By Charles E. Buban

THE CONCEPT of shielding a vehicle has not changed over the past centuries. Even in the old times, (horse-drawn) carriages were fitted with protective iron plates to guard its occupants during war or when going from place to place.

The idea is to have peace of mind—of knowing there's something tough enough to deflect or withstand dangerous projectiles and be able to get away from it.

Today armored vehicles are—still as relevant as before—providing safe transport not only to kings, queens, presidents and prime ministers but also to religious leaders, political figures, businessmen and even entertainment personalities.

With the rate of kidnapping, terrorism and assassinations rising worldwide, the need for armored vehicles cannot be overstated.

Moving around inconspicuously

"And yet these individuals still need to move around inconspicuously—surely they don't want to be seen riding in a tank or an armored personnel carrier," said John Sy, operations manager of International Armoring Corp.'s newest franchise in the Asia-Pacific region.

Said Sy: "When buying a vehicle, one of the first things that comes to the mind of consumers are safety features, thus they look for air bags and antilock brakes, as well as child locks on the doors. Now that IAC is in the Philippines, we have completely raised the bar of keeping occupants safe and sound."

The Utah-based IAC is the world-renowned company that specializes in the manufacture of bullet-resistant passenger vehicles for government officials, heads of state, business executives, or any other individual who perceives a threat.

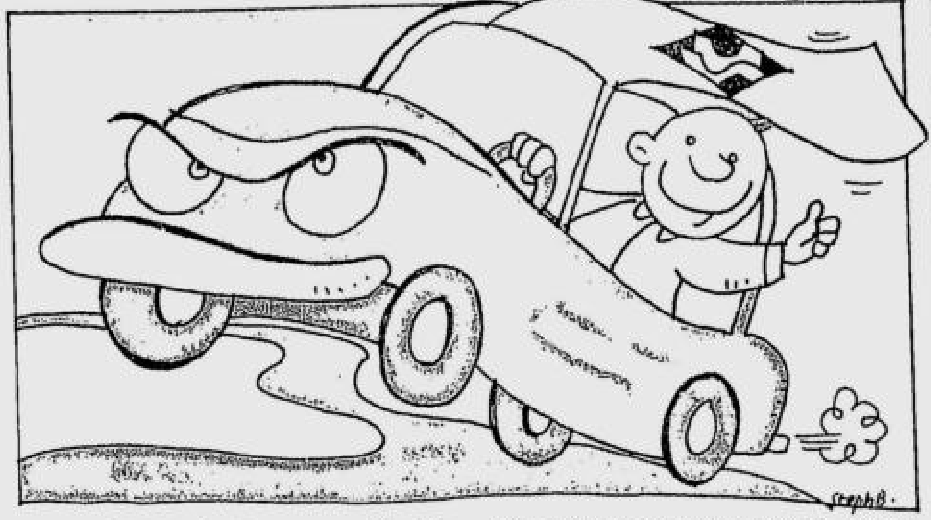
Founded in July 1993 by Mark Burton, IAC today operated 10 plants in nine countries, employing over 300 people. It has facilities in Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico—countries where crime rates are quite alarming.

Filipino talent

"Although the incidence of kidnappings and assassinations is quite notable here, the presence of IAC is meant to highlight Filipino talent as the company placed its trust on Filipinos to carry its tradition of quality workmanship," said Sy who announced they can even accept clients from neighboring countries.

US-trained Filipino technicians will man the IAC Asia-Pacific operation, which commences this month. Their US trainers are expected to arrive soon to supervise the first batches of vehicles for conversion.

Fairly any kind of vehicle can be armored by IAC Asia-Pacific but the models that have long been perfected by the company include the Chevy Suburban, the Jeep Grand Cherokee Limited, the Peugeot 605, Dodge Durango and Ford's Lincoln Town Car.



The new Volkswagen Beetle model has also been added to the company's extensive vehicle lineup.

"It doesn't matter whether it's Japanese-, American- or European-make, as long as the vehicle's engine displacement is two liters and up, we can armor it," announced Sy.

The type of engine power is crucial since it must carry the additional weight of the converted vehicle.

Meticulous process

Vehicle armoring is a meticulous process and it would take at least 300 working hours to complete one vehicle informed Dennis Oliva, COO of IAC Asia-Pacific.

"Being an authority in this field, IAC has a bunch of technicians and engineers who have done numerous studies and actual tests on several vehicle makes and see its overall performance after the conversion," Oliva said.

Oliva said they will be importing premade, premeasured and precut kits from IAC's headquarters in Ogden, Utah.

What level of armoring

IAC was founded on the basic principle of manufacturing the finest passenger vehicles in the world.

"But the type of armoring will still depend on the needs of the individual. It is, therefore, important that customers understand what level of armoring is desired and the perceived threat," said Oliva.

The professionals at IAC Asia-Pacific will help each client determine which is the best level of protection for them.

Superior protection

IAC is able to create armored passenger vehicles which are far superior in performance and appearance to the competition using most technologically advanced armoring methods.

What separates IAC from the rest of the armoring industry, according to Oliva, is the cutting-edge technology that leaves a "converted" vehicle practically identical to that of its regular counterpart when it comes to appearance and, more important, road performance.

IAC employs Armormax, which combines a variety of synthetic fibers. It is the lightest opaque armor in the industry yet it is 10 times stronger than the usually employed ballistic steel.

The Lightweight Transparent Armor or LTA is another technology used by IAC to its windows. It employs composites of glass and polycarbonate substrates laminated with inter layers created to absorb energy from various ballistic threats.

Distortion-free

"What's unique about this technology is that it is distortion-free and designed to look like conventional automotive glass and yet it can stop a variety of lethal weapons," explained Sy.

IAC also protects the vehicle's underbelly using a flexible multilayered ballistic nylon armor sealed to the entire floor. It is designed to absorb bomb fragmentation and is concealed under the carpet and seats to maintain the original appearance of the converted vehicle.

Even the fuel tank is secured with a ballistic wrap and anti-explosives designed to suppress explosions which may occur in the fuel tank.

Original batteries are also replaced with dry-cell Optima batteries to eliminate the ever-present threat of an exploding acid-based battery, which may cause serious damage to the engine and make it inoperable.

Run flat

IAC also offers Run Flat Tire System that will allow the vehicle to travel up to 97 kilometers at 97 kph (depending on road conditions) on flattened tires. A ballistic rubberized plastic "roller" ring is designed, molded and installed inside each tire around the rim.

"When the tires are deflated, the solid rubber ring acts as a backup tire—an airless spare within the tire. This is an optional feature that our client may choose," said Sy.

Also optional are Dual Ram Bumpers, which are concealed behind both the front and the rear bumpers.

This option allows each vehicle to ram their way out of a dangerous situation without causing in-operable damage to the armored vehicle.

"This optional modification is important, too, as it prevents corners of the vehicle from being rammed into the tires, thus making it inoperable," Sy suggested. "These modification among others not only will allow our clients to withstand an attack but most importantly be able to get them out of harm's way."

Mazda may save Ford

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

IF you love cars and saw the movie "X-Men 2," chances are you were dazzled by the car in the film, the Mazda RX-8. The rotary-engine-powered RX-8's role in this blockbuster movie is part of the promotional campaign for Mazda's first new sports car since 1991. Not that it was really necessary, for even before the RX-8 was unveiled in Tokyo by Mazda last month, the buzz created by its debut had already generated 5,000 purchase orders.

The projected success of the RX-8, which will contend with Nissan's new Z-car and Honda's S2000, follows closely the impressive launch of the 2003 Mazda 6, which replaced the Mazda 626 last December. The 160-horsepower, 2.3-liter Mazda 6 (a 220 hp, 3.0-liter V6 is optional) has been receiving so many rave reviews for its athletic performance, superb handling and luxury features despite its affordable price, that Ford Motor Co., which owns one-third of Mazda, has decided to base its Futura and nine other forthcoming Ford, Mercury and Lincoln models on the Mazda 6.

Recover market share

The Futura will be launched in 2005 to replace the fading Taurus in Ford's continuing effort to overtake the Honda Accord and Toyota Camry, the leading midsize family sedans in the United States. Auto industry analysts note that while Ford sales boomed in the 1990s because of its big, truck-based vehicles such as the F-150 pickups, Ford Explorer, Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator, its car models such as the Ford Contour and Mercury Mystique flopped. Sales of the Taurus and its sister vehicle, the Mercury Sable, peaked in 1992 but after 18 years, despite a redesign in 2000, sales fell by 50 percent. Perhaps, with engineering inputs from Mazda, Ford will recover the passenger car market share it has lost to Japanese competitors.

The fact that Ford plans to use the Mazda 6's I-4 powerplant could be making Henry Ford 2nd spin in his grave. Per Lee Iaccocca, the former Ford honcho credited with creating the Mustang, 30 years ago the late Henry Ford 2nd rejected an offer to install Honda engines in Fords. "No car with my name on the hood is going to have a Jap engine inside," Henry Ford's grandson reportedly scoffed.

Sharing with Mazda

Yet Ford grudgingly respected Japanese manufacturing techniques. Hoping to learn from Mazda, Ford Motor Co. acquired 24.5 percent of Mazda in 1979 and upped its equity to the current 33.4 percent in 1996. At first, Ford kept its distance from Mazda cars, turning down the chance to market a US version of the Miata sports coupè. But in the late 1980s, Ford adapted the Mazda 626 as the basis for its sporty Ford Probe, which was sold in the US between 1989 and 1992.

The latest Ford vehicle to share a platform with a Mazda is the Escape, a compact sport utility vehicle that is almost identical to the Mazda Tribute. Both compact SUVs were launched in the US in 2000. (The Escape is assembled in Santa Rosa, Laguna by Ford Group Philippines for export to Thailand.) Ford and Mazda now jointly own an assembly plant in Flat Rock, Michigan.

Owning one-third of Mazda enables Ford to save hundreds of millions of dollars in engineering and development costs. The alliance has allowed both Ford and Mazda to save on the purchase of tools, parts and materials through bigger economies of scale. The savings are heaven-sent for Ford, which is celebrating its centennial this June and struggling to regain profitability after a cumulative net loss of $6.43 billion in the past two years, a decline in credit ratings and a 67 percent drop in stock price.

Bigger benefit

In contrast, Mazda is on a roll. After posting a record loss in 2001, Mazda bounced back with a 77 percent surge in operating profits and a 15 percent increase in sales in the year ending March 2002. Mazda forecast its profit would rise by 24 percent this year, its highest in a decade, as it continues to cut costs and releases 16 new models, including the Mazda 6, the RX-8 sports car and the revamped Familia sedan.

The Ford-Mazda collaboration will help both companies become more efficient, but the bigger benefit for Mazda will come when the Ford group starts using its I-4 engine. Yet, in the same way that Jaguar remains Jaguar and Volvo remains Volvo although they both belong to Ford's Premier Automotive Group, Mazda intends to retain its separate identity through the rotary engine it is famous for and through its sports cars such as the RX-8.

In short, the snazzy Mazda 6—reshaped and rebadged as the Futura and other new Ford, Mercury and Lincoln cars—could save Ford. But Ford may no longer need saving, for it reported a first-quarter profit of $896 million last month.

(with Bloomberg News, The New York Times and other news reports)

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: A backwards poet writes inverse.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph

Asian Formula 3 launches series opener

IT'S speed galore once again as the Asian Formula 3 Series 2003 flags off on May 10 and 11 at the Subic International Raceway inside the Subic Bay Freeport.

Touted as the region's premier motor racing event, the Asian Formula 3 Series—organized by the Asian Formula 3 Corp. (AF3) under the auspices of the Automobile Association of the Philippines—features a six-leg, 12-race calendar that will be held in Malaysia, Japan, Korea and China, with the opening leg set in the Philippines.

Tom Pastor, president of E Colby Ventures Inc., Philippine promoter of the Asian Formula 3 Series 2003, said during the official launch last week: "We are extremely proud that this prestigious event is pushing through despite the negative economic climate prevailing in Asia. We realize that the recent war in Iraq and the SARS epidemic that has hit the region are making it extremely difficult for both organizers and competitors to participate in the series, but their presence here tonight is proof of their confidence and collective ability to prevail over all of this adversity."

Defending AF3 champion and Castrol Ambi Pur driver Mark Goddard of the United Kingdom, 2002 AF2000 champion Dennis Lian of Singapore, 2002 Asian Formula Renault titleholder Enzo Pastor of the Philippines and 2001 Philippine Formula 3 champion Jojo Silverio of the Philippines have all confirmed their participation in the opening leg.

During the launch, Goddard was presented with the AF3 Cup for winning the 2002 AF3 driver's championship. Pastor, meanwhile, received the FedEx Cup for being the first Filipino to win the Asian Formula Renault Series.

Expected to lead the foreign challenge are Hong Kong's Marchy Lee, who won last year's leg in Sepang, as well as his Vertex Motorsports teammate and countryman Paul Chan. Driving the team's third car will be Taiwanese Jeffrey Lee. 2002 AF2000 champion Dennis Lian of Singapore has also signified his intention to participate under the Denso JF3 banner.

The Filipino contingent, meanwhile, will also feature Pepon Marave and Mike Potenciano of the Shell Racing Team, Richard Joson of Denso JF3 Racing, Speedtech Asia's JP Tuason and Roland Hermoso.

Excise tax woes; computerization bid at LTO

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

I HAVE been receiving complaints about how haphazard the repairs are being done at the North Luzon Expressway. They cite one common plaint: That a lane converted into one-way traffic has been causing monstrous traffic jams, especially that one near San Fernando, Pampanga. A terrible accident in that vicinity involving six vehicles has also claimed the lives of two persons, injured several more and rendered two cars total wreck.

Many had hoped a minor inconvenience would hit motorists when the rehabilitation leading to a modernized version of the NLE would commence. I guess events cited by readers, among them British businessman Rob Dix, are proving them wrong.

I guess it's not yet late in the day for officials to initiate immediate moves to solve the problem. The expansion project has just begun. Please, let's not wait for things to worsen before we act concretely on the gripes of our *kababayans.*

* * *

The computerization of the Land Transportation Office has been in the works for some time now and, toward this end, the LTO has been trying its best to include the aspect of computerized insurance of vehicles when registering a vehicle.

I was told the Stradcom's COC-AF (Certification of Cover-Authentification Facility) is being seriously considered by the LTO for implementation for Stradcom's sheer adaptability with the present LTO-IT system. Here's one pitch for computerization that should not fall on deaf ears.

For one, Stradcom's COC-AF handles COC authentification and verification online, in real time, without human intervention. For another, it's high time the LTO adopted such a system to completely do away with CTPL insurance hassles triggered mostly by man-made insurance brouhahas.

* * *

I do not wish to add to the brewing fire between LTO and Isap over disagreements on the authentication system of Stradcom. But upon serious study of the matter, it would really seem that Stradcom has the edge in introducing hi-tech methods of authentification-verification of insurance-related matters regarding vehicle registration.

It's been years that our LTO has been plagued by all sorts of shenanigans victimizing hapless motorists who are either given fake insurance coverages, if not recycled ones. They are only discovered when accidents finally happen. I have been availing myself religiously of insurance coverages, mainly banking on trust in paying the fees of the insurance company whose president or owners I do not even know from Adam. All these years, I have yet to see a computer-encoded data in any of my insurance documents.

LTO should now immediately put an end to our fears. It is not only fake and recycled CTPL-COCs that circulate the archipelago with alarming regularity but also unauthorized insurance documents are being passed off as genuine papers. This can be swiftly addressed with the entry of Stradcom, whose computer systems, I am told, can never be manipulated by human magicians.

* * *

Is it true that Proton Pilipinas, the Malaysian carmaker avoided paying the correct taxes as one broadsheet reported some days back?

The report said the carmaker did so by availing of the tax credit certificate of TEX-ASIA Inc., a textile maker. The government, the report further said, viewed the tax credit transfer "fraudulent."

I am a bit confused, if not bothered, by that report. How can a prestigious car company like Proton Pilipinas commit an irregularity and hope to get away with it? Either that report was inaccurate or the government was shooting from the hip.

* * *

Who is afraid of Canada, a known carrier of SARS?

Not the Philippine Airlines. The flag carrier will add another weekly direct flight between Manila and Vancouver starting on Sunday, May 11, raising total frequencies between the two points to four times weekly.

The new flight will follow the same timings as the current Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday flights. Departure from Manila (PR 106) is at 7:30 p.m. and arrival in Vancouver at 5 p.m. the same day. The return service (PR 107) departs Vancouver at 11:15 p.m. and arrives in Manila at 4:15 a.m. two calendar days later. Manila time is 16 hours ahead of Vancouver's.

"The Airbus A340-300 aircraft will continue to be deployed on the route," said PAL executive Rollie Estabillo.

* * *

The debate on Senate Bill No. 2157, the one dealing with vehicle excise taxes, still rages in the Upper Chamber even as the Lower House has already approved the shift from engine-based to value-based insofar as determining a vehicle's excise tax is concerned.

In a nutshell, the bill, once approved, will command a higher excise tax on vehicles relatively priced higher than the ordinary. Meaning, the higher the value of the vehicle is, the higher its excise tax will be.

Thus if your vehicle is priced P500,000 or below, you will be levied 3 percent; above P500,000 but not more than P1 million, 15 percent plus P15,000. A vehicle costing from P1 million to P2 million will

EXCISE/B13

Safety group introduces accident prevention campaign

THE SAFETY Organization of the Philippines Inc. (Sopi) will soon launch a road safety and accident prevention campaign to minimize losses in human lives and property.

Sopi national president Dr. Mario C. Tanchanco said the extensive campaign would be undertaken in cooperation with various government agencies and transport groups this summer, when there is a bigger volume of motorists taking the road to go to various places in the country.

Partipants

Among government agencies that would participate in the road safety and accident prevention campaign are the Department of Transportation and Communications and its operating units, the Land Transportation Office and the Land Transportation Franchising Regulatory Board, Department of Tourism, Department of Public Works and Highways, Metro Manila Development Authority and the Traffic Management Group of the Philippine National Police, Tanchanco disclosed.

On the other hand, he said, the transport groups include the Confederation of Truckers Association of the Philippines (Coltap), Provincial Bus Operators of the Philippines, Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association (Imboa), Kapisanan ng Kooperatiba ng Panlupang Sasakyan ng Pilipinas, Fejodap and the Association of Taxi Operators of the Philippines.

Sopi executive director Freddie Lim Lopez said his group has been meeting with representatives from government agencies and transport groups to map out the strategies for the campaign.

He said the number of road accidents has been alarming and this sad situation has to be addressed by all sectors of society, not only by government agencies concerned.

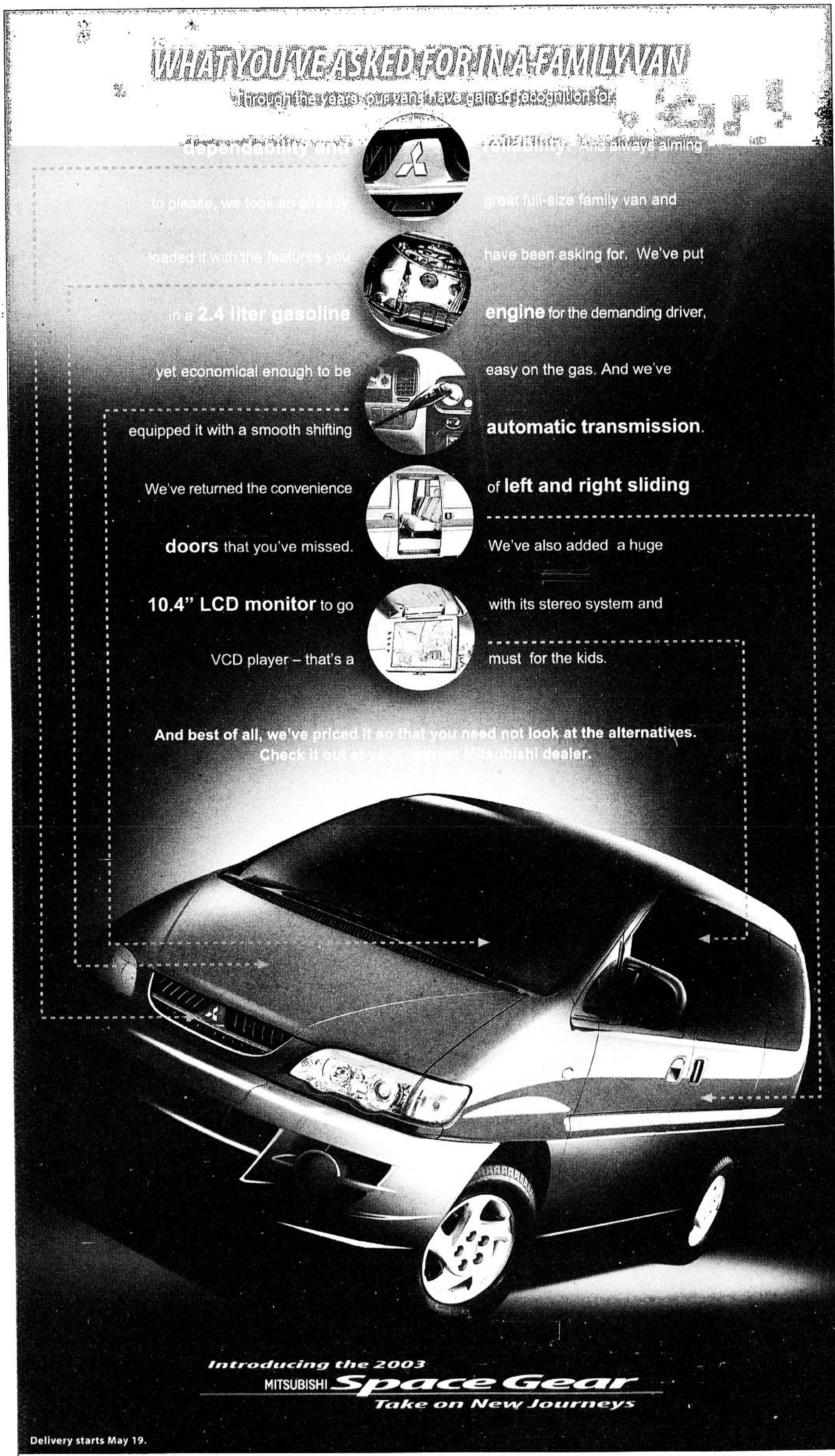
Convention

Lopez said a three-day road safety convention, to be held in Baguio City at the last week of May, would cap the road safety and accident prevention campaign. The convention would bring together road safety experts from government and private sectors to present papers on how to further promote road safety and prevent road accidents.

Sopi was organized in 1959 as a non-government organization dedicated to saving lives and properties through accident prevention. It promotes and generates interest in safety as a discipline and way of life both at home and at the workplace. Since 1967, it has been the unifying and sole implementing arm of the National Safety Movement in the country.

Erratum

ON PAGE B11 of last week's motoring issue (May 1, 2003), the unit price of the 4x4 Dodge Durango should have read P2.7 million. We regret the error.



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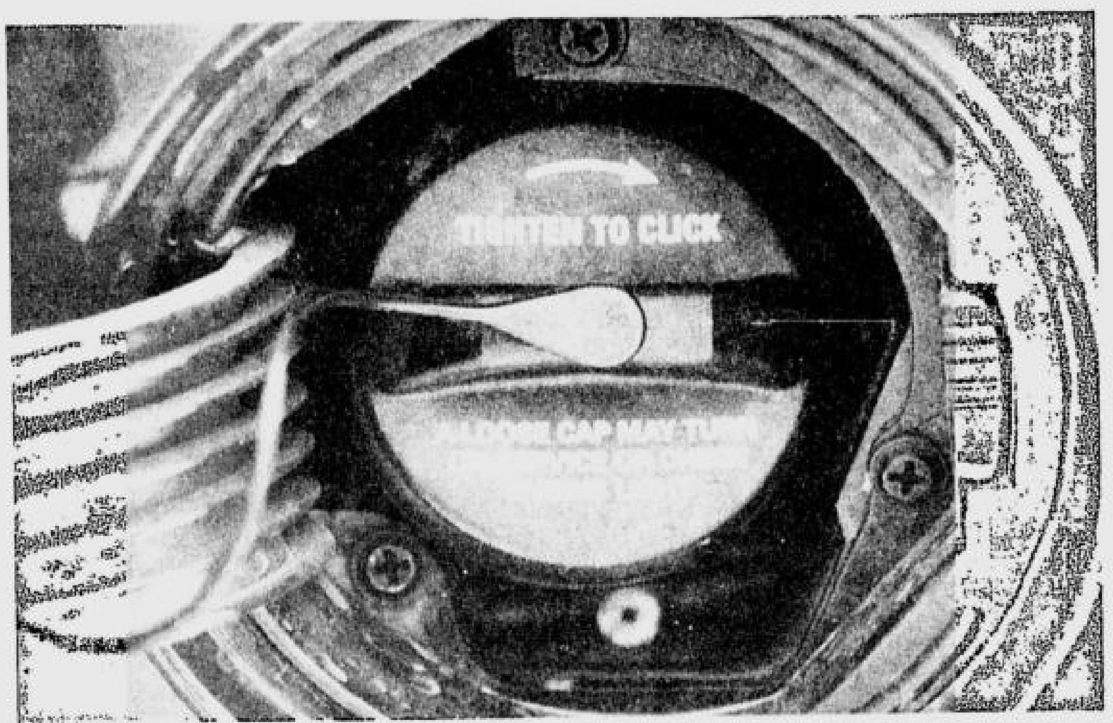
THE T&C has power doors and power lift gate that automatically opens and closes at the touch of the remote button.

A HEAD turner, it has well-sculpted sporty design, with ribs and lines on the sides, chrome streak and sloping back.

Mini hauler can pamper a family of seven

By Tessa R. Salazar



EVEN the fuel tank has been designed for safety and is tamper-proof. Its opening has a safety device against overtightening and an antisiphoning device that prevents the transfer of fuel via a hose.

THE T&C did a good job keeping the remaining cold air in and keeping hot air from entering.

PHOTOS: ALEX P. LOINAZ

FOR A MINIVAN, the well-sculpted sporty design, the ribs and lines on the sides, the chrome streak, and the sloping back of the Town & Country Lxi was a head turner, no question about it. What really caught our attention at the recent transport show, however, were the power doors and power lift gate that automatically opened and closed at the touch of the remote button. And these even had obstacle detection systems to boot.

We could actually hear the mechanism, the motors opening and closing the sliding passenger doors and the hatchback. Amazing. The second thought was, uh-oh, hopefully the gears, chains and pulleys won't corrode and give out so soon, especially if these were exposed to our humid, tropical climates and submerged in waist-deep floods. Knock on wood (paneling).

Pleasurable drive

A four-hour drive in the seven-seater T&C proved pleasurable, this friendly vehicle yielding quick-steering response, easy-to-use cruise controls (which I was able to try on the open highway). The vehicle was reliable on overtakes, and no one among my passengers felt tired after the out-of-town drive.

This mini family hauler can pamper a family of seven, with the four captain's seats and a row of comfortable seats. It even has a triple-zone climate control, a compass, and a roomy versa bin storage compartment. Useful info is readily seen at the front, such as the temperature display and the direction, and switches for optional power features. Behind the rear seats is a thoughtfully placed cargo organizer. The heavy doors close with a satisfying thud.

Power features

Equipped with a V6 engine and a displacement of 3.3 liters, the T&C has the pulling power of 180 horses squeezed into its 5,093-mm long, 1,852-mm high frame. The wheelbase is long, at 3,030 mm, and the car itself is heavy at 2,909 kilos at least, thus providing a smoother ride on bumpy roads. We went over subdivision humps and felt only a slight thump.

Like a well-bred workhorse, it'll go wherever you tug it—and without complaints: the steering sound, the handling secure, the ride solid. The tires are quiet, complementing the quiet purr of the engine. If we may borrow an advertising cliché: the only thing you hear is the clock ticking.

The headlights are made of polycarbonate, which results in greater impact resistance. A direct impact will not scatter broken glass all over the place.

The T&C took to the dirt roads the same confidence it did on paved highways, as effortlessly as possible. At a P2-million price tag, we thought, this vehicle has to work that hard.

The antilock brake system of the T&C, it seems, has been well-adjusted. The ABS does not come into play until absolutely necessary. The "edge" of its braking tolerance level is quite longer. It has air bags on both sides with four-wheeled disc antilock brakes, which could improve steering control during hard braking.

The insulation system was impressive. We left the minivan under the scorching summer sun for hours, yet the van wasn't so hot when we went back inside. The T&C did a good job keeping the remaining cold air in and keeping hot air from entering.

The dashboard gives justice to the price tag. We especially liked the gauges, which had a retro '60s look—with a modern touch, for alongside gauges for speed and fuel consumption, it also had "fuel to empty" indicator and tire pressure sensors.

The flow box computer registered our fuel mileage at 6 km per liter in the city. The flow box computer can also sense the remaining amount of fuel based on the amount of air flowing through the flow box.

The fuel/mileage gauges fluctuate from time to time, depending on how you step on the accelerator pedal.

Antitampering devices

The T&C possesses tamper-resistant electronic trip meters. It would be virtually impossible to reset or tamper with the odometer.

By the way, the mere possession of tools intended to reset odometers is a violation of the law. The Clean Air Act requires vehicles to possess tamper-resistant odometers to protect both the consumer and the manufacturer of the vehicle. This is also one way of determining if the owner of the vehicle has religiously followed manufacturer's guidelines for regular maintenance schedules.

Tightly packed engine

Special tools, however, are needed to see the engine parts and peripherals. This is also the kind of engine where you have to wait for it to cool down before you can do anything. The T&C is such a car that has been designed to require a service center equipped with proper special tools to service the engine. Perhaps it is the manufacturer's way to ensure that the vehicle is serviced only by authorized shops. So much for the neighborhood *talyer*.

Nevertheless, the T&C engine is well-insulated. A single belt carries everything. The computer box, which is not even hidden, looks heavy-duty, and it is sealed in such a way that you can't open it.

A note to LTO stencil boys: no use finding the engine number beneath the hood. The vehicle identification number (VIN) is on the dashboard.

Even the fuel tank has been designed for safety and is tamper proof. The fuel tank opening has a safety device against overtightening, and an antisiphoning device prevents transfer of fuel via a hose. We just couldn't find the indicator alarm when we purposely ran the car with an open cap.

Norkis Automotive Resources Corp., the Town & Country's exclusive distributor in the Philippines, offers the T&C for P1.9 million.

Verdict: If I had P1.9 million, I'd go ahead and buy a T&C for all the good things it does to me and my loved ones. But I would have to keep my credit and ATM cards ready, and keep a map of the gas stations stuck on the dashboard, because at 6 km per liter, the fuel gauge moves down like the hour hand of your old town clock.

(Note: manufacturer's fuel mileage: 5 to 7 km on city drive, 7 to 10 km on highway drive)

Jianshe Motorcycle supports media summit

JIANSHE Motorcycle Industries Philippines Corp., one of the forerunner motorcycle manufacturers in the Philippines, joins the 2nd national media summit slated on May 21 to 23 under the auspices of the Federation of Provincial Press Clubs of the Philippines in cooperation with the Publishers and Editors League of the Philippines.

With the theme "Media's Role in Time of Crisis, Toward a Strong Republic," this year's media event is expected to gather some 250 delegates composed of press clubs presidents and officers, publishers, editors, columnists, broadcast station managers, news directors, government information officers, campus writers, and other countrywide media personalities.

Top executives of Jianshe motorcycle will deliver messages to the delegates during the industry forum on the third day of the activity.

Jianshe Motorcycle Industries Philippines, established in September 2000, is a subsidiary of 103-year-old Jianshe Industries Co. of Chongqing, China. The company recently launched a full lineup of motorcycles intended for the needs of every Filipino to include cub models, solo sports, scooters, business models and cruise motorbikes.

Jianshe Motorcycle strives to stand by its commitment of providing Filipinos a global standard of quality excellence.

Excise tax woes; computerization bid at LTO

From page B11

be levied P90,000 plus 30 percent of the value in excess of P1 million. The one priced more than P2 million will be charged P390,000 more plus 50 percent of the value in excess of P2 million.

So, you still want to buy a car after the passage of Bill No. 2157? If I were you, beat the bill. Call my friend who is selling his car (mileage not over 40,000 km) for only P375,000. He can be reached at 09189177150.

* * *

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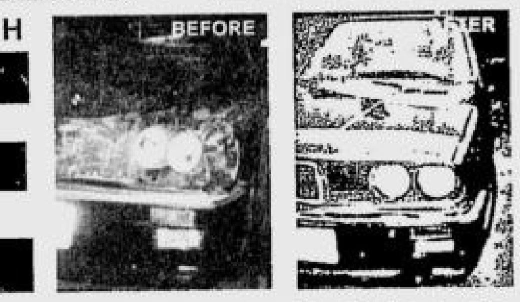

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. At-224, Series of 2003

January-April vehicle sales surge 26.6%

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

VEHICLE sales rose 26.6 percent in the first four months this year as buyers continued to advance their purchases of Asian utility vehicles, sport utility vehicles, vans, and pickup trucks ahead of the government's imposition of taxes on these tax-exempt units.

The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. reported yesterday that sales hit 31,006 units from January to April this year from 24,496 units a year ago.

Sales have so far been driven by the impending taxes with demand shifting notably to commercial vehicles that would be rendered expensive once the new tax rules kick in. Commercial vehicle sales surged 43.1 percent to 24,706 units in the first four months this year from 17,267 units a year ago.

The new tax rates were supposed to have been approved by March but differences among senators on whether to retain or remove the AUV's tax-free status forced a delay in the approval on the new tax bill now set on May 19. AUV sales have rocketed 69 percent to 15,802 units from January to April this year.

Demand for passenger cars have slowed down drastically during the period as buyers wisely wait for the new tax rates that would cut entry-level models from 15 percent to 3 percent. Passenger car sales fell 12.9 percent to 6,300 units in the first four months from 7,229 units during the same period last year.

Honda Cars Philippine Inc.'s AUV, the CRV, remained as the industry's best-selling model with total sales of 4,751 units through April, edging out Toyota Motor Philippines Corp.'s Tamaraw FX which sold 4,594 units during the period.

Toyota, however, remained as the leading assembler in the country with total sales of 8,848 units or 28 percent of the market. Honda was second with 5,865 units sold or 18.8 percent of the market. Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. was third with 5,225 units sold or 17 percent of the market.

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Dear Inay,

Eto na po ang inyong stateside na anak!!! Di ba ang ganda ko??? Nagsimula na po kami sa ospital last week. Masaya naman ang trabaho at mababait sila. Naaalala po ba ninyo si Mona, kaklase ko sa St. Augustine? Nandito na rin pala siya, kaya may kaibigan agad ako.

Alam niyo Inay buti nalang at pinag-tiyagaan po ninyo akong pag-aralin. Nagagamit ko po talaga lahat ng pinag-aralan ko—nagulat nga po sila at napaka-well trained daw namin. Siyempre, St. Augustine eh! Pati nga placement sa trabaho, sila tumulong, di po ba?

Yan po muna ang kuwento. Maaga po ang shift ko ngayon. Pa-kiss kay bunso.

Love,
Sarah =)

P.S. Ngayon, makakabawi naman ako sa inyo. Mag-iipon po ako ng husto. At siyempre, magpapakabait!

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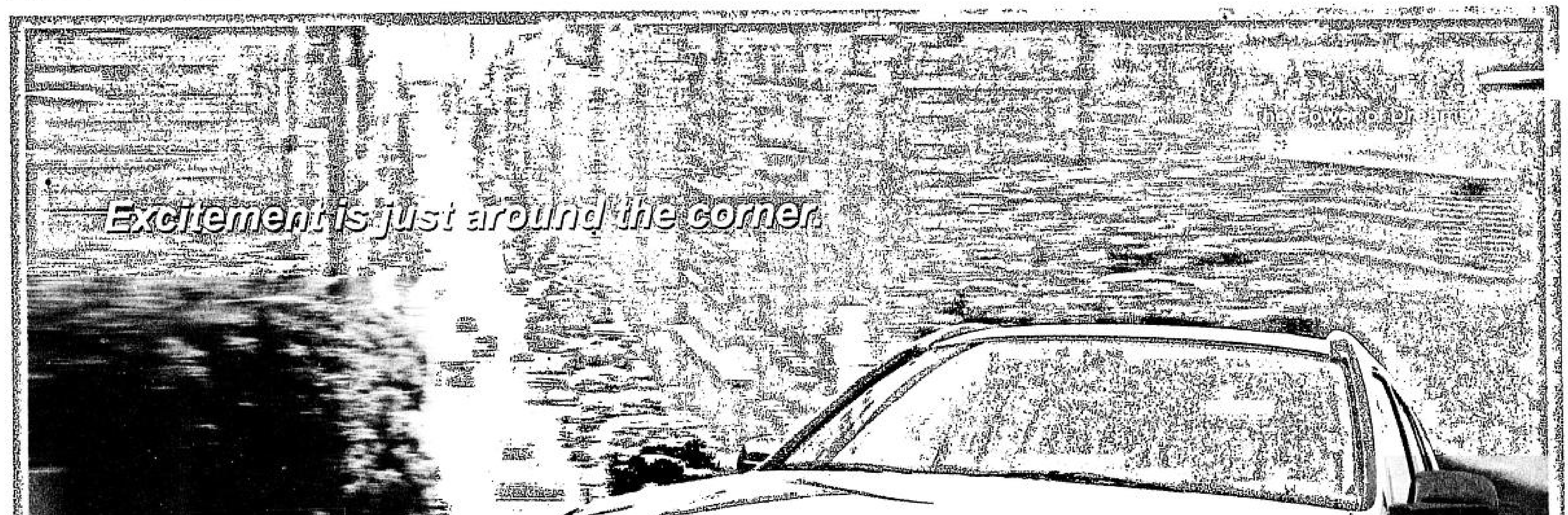

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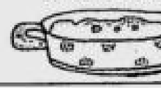
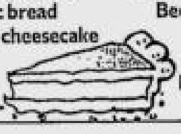
Tastes LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

Soups and stews for the rainy season

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY	Sautéed canned sardines with onions Hot pan de sal Butter and fruit jam Hot chocolate, coffee, milk or fruit juice	Instant crabmeat and corn soup Fried fish with sweet and sour sauce Rice Fruit gelatin	Vegetable chopsuey Chicken ala kiev Rice Chilled watermelon
TUESDAY	Cheese omelet Fried spam Toasted bread Butter and fruit jam Coffee, hot chocolate, milk or fruit juice	Pancit bihon guisado Garlic bread Banana turon a la mode	Green salad Macaroni and chorizo soup Beef steak a la pobre Rice Canned peaches with ice
WEDNESDAY	Garlic rice Pork tocino Hot chocolate, coffee or milk Pineapple	*Halaan* soup with *malunggay* leaves Fried breaded porkchop Rice Mangoes and cream	*Pesang isda* with potatoes and leeks Rice Sliced watermelon
THURSDAY	Hotcake with butter and maple syrup Cheese hotdog Hot chocolate, coffee or milk Papaya with *calamansi*	Beef caldereta Rice Buko sherbet 	Chicken adobo with quail eggs and *wansoy* Boiled *okra* Rice Sago salad with chico and cream
FRIDAY	Cereal with milk Pan grilled ham or spam Toasted bread Butter and fruit jam Hot chocolate, coffee, milk or fruit juice	Chicken spaghetti Garlic bread Blueberry cheesecake 	Cream of mushroom soup Beef steak with onion rings Rice Melon a la mode
SATURDAY	Corned beef *guisado* Rice or toasted *pan de sal* Hot chocolate, coffee or milk Sliced avocado with sugar and milk	Stewed pork legs with peanuts *Pandan* rice Canned lychee with ice	Roast chicken Pancit canton Garlic bread Fresh fruit platter
SUNDAY	Garlic rice Fried *daing na bangus* Salted egg with tomatoes Hot chocolate, coffee or milk Ripe mangoes	Coconut chicken soup Pork barbecue *Pandan* rice *Mangang hinog at suman sa Ibus*	Steamed fish Hot prawn salad Yang chow fried rice Almond jelly

ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

FREQUENT afternoon thunderstorms signal that the rainy season is about to begin. The rains, no matter how short, provide us with a quick relief from the summer heat that we have been experiencing the past few weeks. Here we offer soup and stews from the usual to the exotic to add excitement to our rainy days menu. Soups and stews are sure to live up to the comfort food label as the rains start to pour. Let the rains begin....

Macaroni and Chorizo Soup

(a Spanish-inspired recipe)

¼ c butter
2 tbsp well-pounded garlic
½ c chopped onions
2 pcs chorizo de bilbao cut into strips
2 tsp rock salt
black pepper to taste
½ pc chicken broth cube
370 ml can evaporated milk
2 cans water
1 c raw macaroni noodles, cooked according to package directions

Heat the butter in

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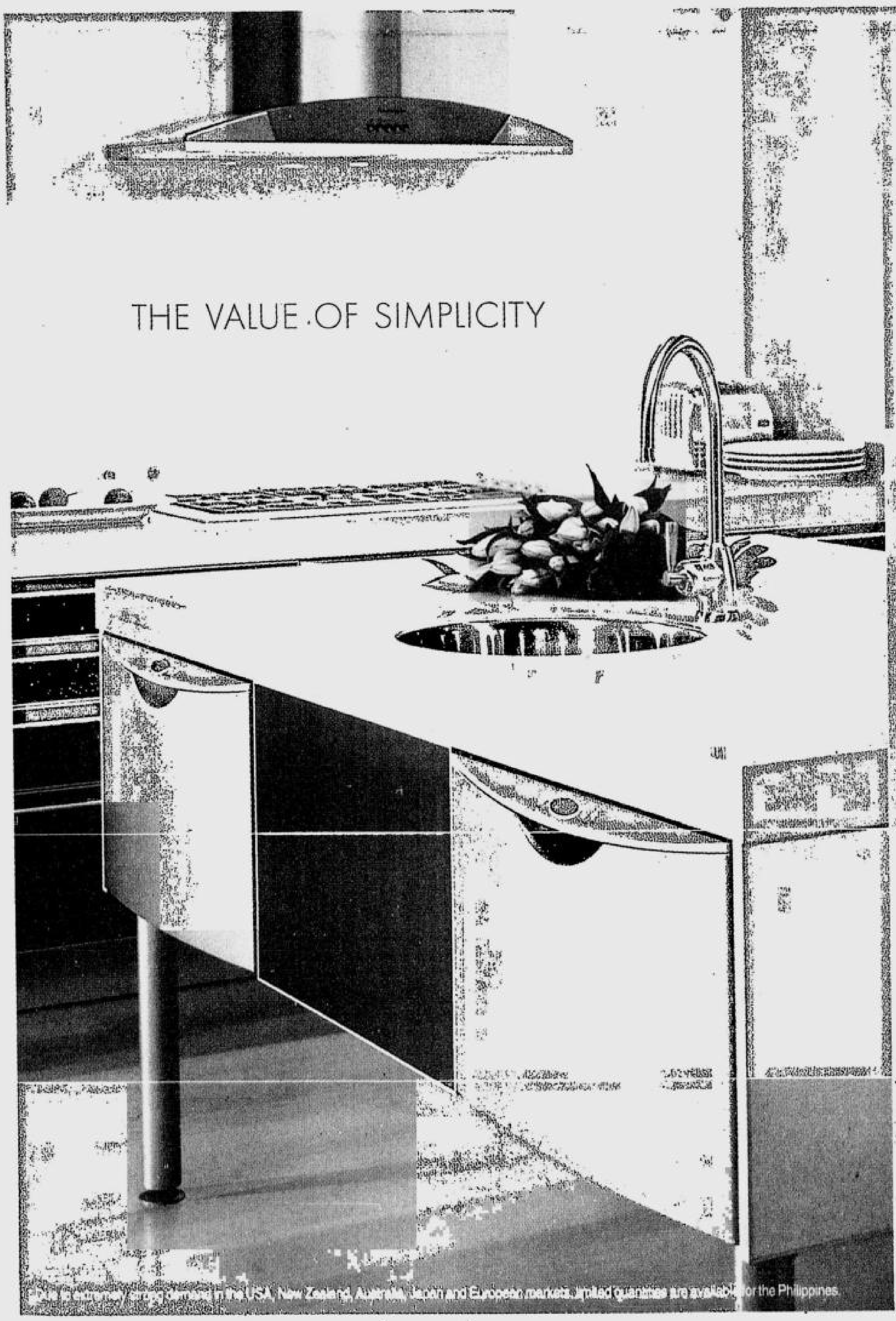

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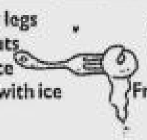
or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

Soups and stews for the rainy season

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY	Sautéed canned sardines with onions Hot pan de sal Butter and fruit jam Hot chocolate, coffee, milk or fruit juice	Instant crabmeat and corn soup Fried fish with sweet and sour sauce Rice Fruit gelatin	Vegetable chopsuey Chicken ala kiev Rice Chilled watermelon
TUESDAY	Cheese omelet Fried spam Toasted bread Butter and fruit jam Coffee, hot chocolate, milk or fruit juice	Pancit bihon guisado Garlic bread Banana turon a la mode	Green salad Macaroni and chorizo soup Beef steak a la pobre Rice Canned peaches with ice
WEDNESDAY	Garlic rice Pork *tocino* Hot chocolate, coffee or milk Pineapple	*Halaan* soup with *malunggay* leaves Fried breaded porkchop Rice Mangoes and cream	*Pesang isda* with potatoes and leeks Rice Sliced watermelon
THURSDAY	Hotcake with butter and maple syrup Cheese hotdog Hot chocolate, coffee or milk Papaya with *calamansi*	Beef caldereta Rice Buko sherbet	Chicken adobo with quail eggs and *wansoy* Boiled *okra* Rice Sago salad with chico and cream
FRIDAY	Cereal with milk Pan grilled ham or spam Toasted bread Butter and fruit jam Hot chocolate, coffee, milk or fruit juice	Chicken spaghetti Garlic bread Blueberry cheesecake	Cream of mushroom soup Beef steak with onion rings Rice Melon a la mode
SATURDAY	Corned beef *guisado* Rice or toasted *pan de sal* Hot chocolate, coffee or milk Sliced avocado with sugar and milk	Stewed pork legs with peanuts *Pandan* rice Canned lychee with ice 	Roast chicken Pancit canton Garlic bread Fresh fruit platter
SUNDAY	Garlic rice Fried *daing na bangus* Salted egg with tomatoes Hot chocolate, coffee or milk Ripe mangoes	Coconut chicken soup Pork barbecue *Pandan* rice *Mangang hinog at suman sa ibus*	Steamed fish Hot prawn salad Yang chow fried rice Almond jelly

ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

FREQUENT afternoon thunderstorms signal that the rainy season is about to begin. The rains, no matter how short, provide us with a quick relief from the summer heat that we have been experiencing the past few weeks. Here we offer soup and stews from the usual to the exotic to add excitement to our rainy days menu. Soups and stews are sure to live up to the comfort food label as the rains start to pour. Let the rains begin...

Macaroni and Chorizo Soup

(a Spanish-inspired recipe)

¼ c butter

2 tbsp well-pounded garlic

½ c chopped onions

2 pcs chorizo de bilbao cut into strips

2 tsp rock salt

black pepper to taste

½ pc chicken broth cube

370 ml can evaporated milk

2 cans water

1 c raw macaroni noodles, cooked according to package directions

Heat the butter in

SOUPS/ C2

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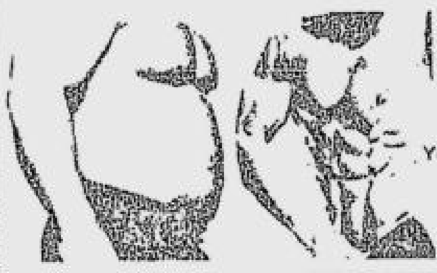

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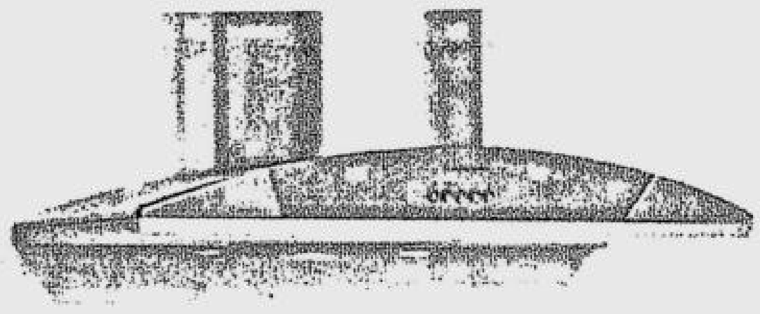

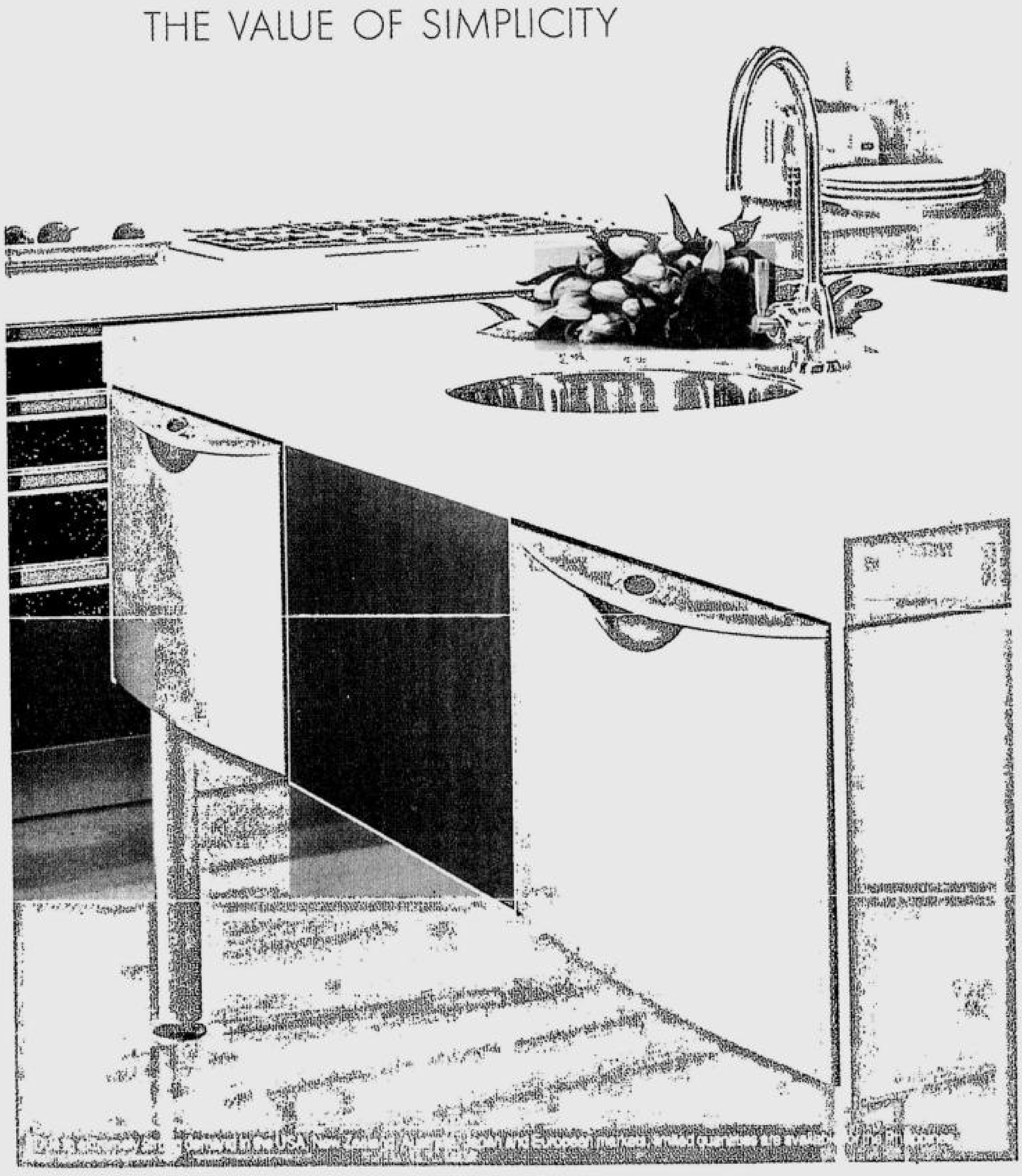

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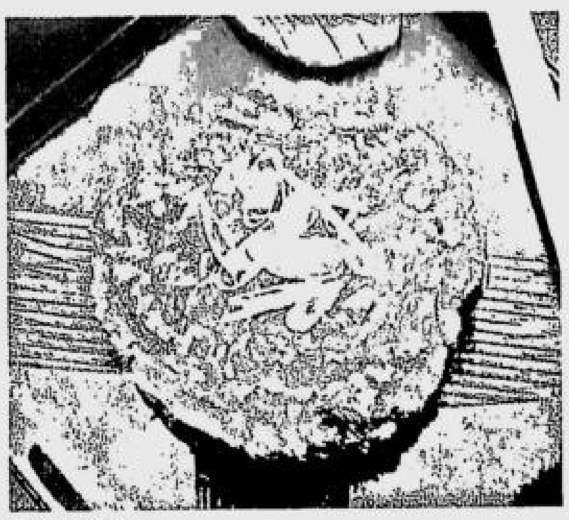
SPICY Tuna

CHICKEN Rice

SUKIYAKI Don Buri

SOBORO Don Buri

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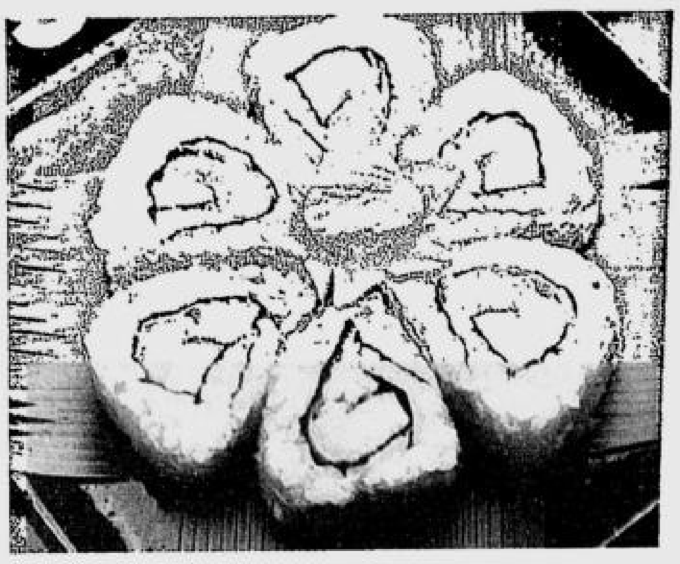

CALIFORNIA Maki

OWNERS Tin Tin and Bing Rivera

ASSORTED Sushi Platter

BENTO Box Special

Photos by Mandy Navasero

AT Murasaki, you can dine with the stars and feast on sumptuous Nippon food at affordable prices.

Located at the ground floor of ELJ Tower in the ABS-CBN compound, Mother Ignacia Street, QC, Murasaki has a loyal following among celebrities.

Judy Ann Santos loves Mango Sashimi (P120), Chicken Teriyaki (P115) and Tofu Steak. Cesar Montano often orders Chicken Teriyaki. Joyce Jimenez relishes Hamachi Sashimi (P350). Heart Evangelista and John Prats both prefer Ebi Tempura.

Even top ABS-CBN executives have their own Murasaki favorites: Dynamite Roll (good for four, P380) and Unagi Special Roll (P175) for Gabby Lopez and Unagi Special Roll for Charo Santos-Concio.

Recently, Murasaki came up with five Bento Box variations, complete meals that include hefty portions of sushi, gyoza, teriyaki or teppanyaki or tempura or sashimi, miso soup, Japanese rice and dessert, for only P150.

Among Murasaki's bestsellers are Spicy Tuna (P65), Tempura (Prawn, P155), California Maki (P95), Tekka Maki (P60), Katsudon (P120), Yaki Udon (P120), and Tofu Steak (P115).

Call 410-1973/85.

Buffet restaurant treats moms to 5 new dishes

THIS month, Cabalen, the premiere buffet restaurant, offers five new dishes. Featured on the P220+ eat-all-you-can, eat-all-you-want buffet of Kapampangan Specialties are Chicken Binakol, Laing Dulong wrapped with Gabi leaves, Chilimasag, Halaan with Squash Soup, Cabalen Patatim, and Minatamis na Saguin.

For a minimum of P1,000, mothers can get a free Cabalen Deli plus a chance to win accommodations for two at Bayview Park Hotel sponsored by Haranah Tours. Also, Cabalen is featuring Fried Chicken Wings, Fried Lumpiang Bangus, and Vegetable Spring Roll to pay tribute to all mothers.

Cabalen's West Avenue and Katipunan branches in Quezon City can be reserved for weddings, birthdays, baptismals, children's parties, debuts or meetings. The West Avenue branch may even be booked entirely for private occasions and can accommodate at least 300 guests. Cabalen also caters.

Cabalen has 10 outlets: West Avenue and Katipunan Avenue in Q.C., SM Megamall, SM City North Edsa, SM City Manila, Robinsons Place Ermita Manila, Robinsons Starmills Pampanga, Glorietta 3 Ayala Center, Brick Road Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall, and the newly opened branch at Harrison Village Square Manila.

Cabalen shares the following recipe with the readers:

CHILIMASAG

Chilimasag

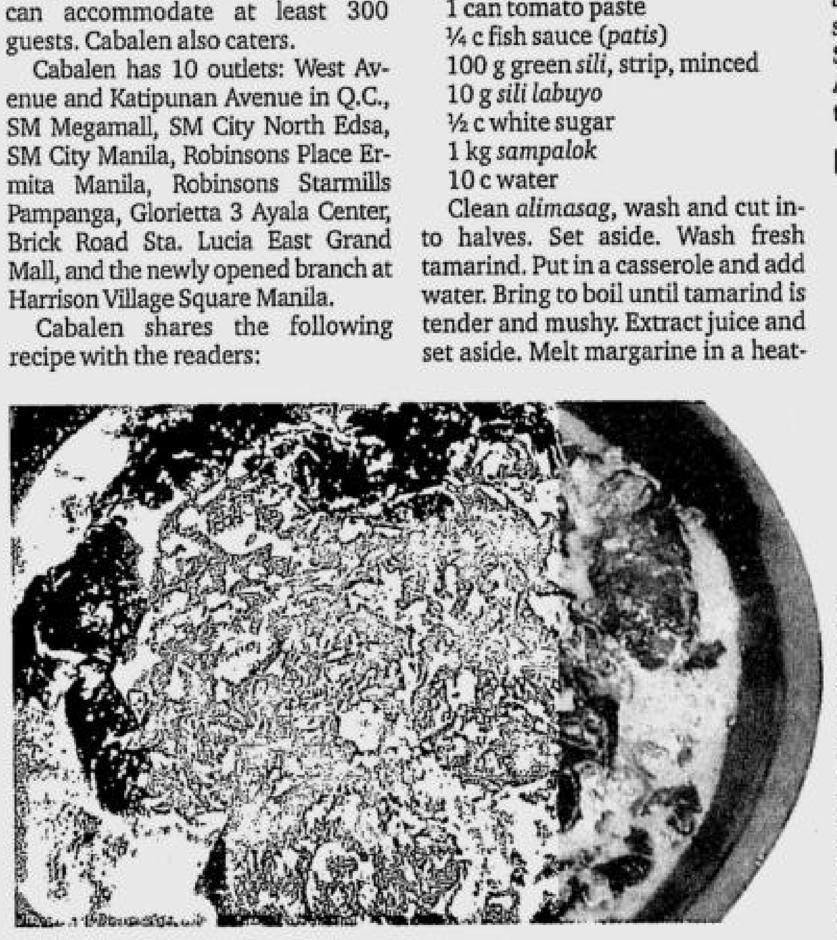
2 kg *alimasag*, sliced into halves
100 g margarine
30 g garlic crushed
100 g onion sliced
1 can tomato paste
¼ c fish sauce (*patis*)
100 g green *sili*, strip, minced
10 g *sili labuyo*
½ c white sugar
1 kg *sampalok*
10 c water

Clean *alimasag*, wash and cut into halves. Set aside. Wash fresh tamarind. Put in a casserole and add water. Bring to boil until tamarind is tender and mushy. Extract juice and set aside. Melt margarine in a heated wok. Sauté garlic until golden brown. Add onion and cook until wilted. Add tomato paste, stir and let simmer for 1 minute. Add *alimasag* and fish sauce. Stir *sili labuyo*, tamarind extract and white sugar. Bring to boil for 30 seconds. Stir, cover. Simmer for 3 minutes. Add green *sili*. Cook until done. Salt to taste. Serve.

Laing dulong

1 ½ kg fresh *dulong*
30 pcs *gabi* leaves, whole
50 g *luya*, minced
115 g onion, minced
10 g *sili labuyo*, minced
60 g red *sili, minced*
60 g green *sili*, minced
25 g garlic, minced
100 g butter
3 kg *kayod niyog*
6 c water
¼ c *calamansi*
4 c *bulalo* soup (plain)

Wash fresh *dulong*. Drain and set aside. Extract *kayod niyog* in 6 c water. Strain and set aside. In a clean wok, sauté ginger in butter for 30 seconds. Add garlic and cook until light brown in color. Add onion and cook until wilted. Add *dulong*, red and green *sili, sili labuyo*. Stir and cook for 3 minutes. Cool then wrap in *gabi* leaves 50 g each. Arrange in a wok. Add coconut milk, *calamansi* and plain *bulalo* soup. Cook until done. Add salt to taste. Serve.


LAING Dulong

Soups and stews for the rainy season

From page C1

a stockpot. Sauté the garlic, onions and chorizo until the onions are limp. Add salt, pepper, chicken cube, milk, water and macaroni noodles. Allow to boil and then simmer for 5 minutes. Serve immediately.

Coconut Chicken Soup

(a Thai classic)
3 tbsp corn oil
1 tbsp ginger, sliced into strips
½ c onions, sliced
½ kg chicken thighs, skinned, deboned and sliced into strips
3 c water
6 stalks lemon grass, grassy portion discarded, bulb peeled and bruised
6 pcs kaffir lime leaves (optional)
1 big taro (Chinese *gabi*), peeled and cut into chunks
2 tbsp fish sauce
½ c sliced fresh shiitake or straw mushrooms
1 coconut, grated and milk extracted with 1 c water
½ c sliced cilantro
2 tbsp chopped spring onions
juice of 1 American lemon
freshly ground black pepper to taste
2 tbsp fish sauce
1 tsp salt
½ tsp bottled chili garlic sauce

Heat the oil in a large wok. Sauté the ginger until fragrant. Add the onions and continue to sauté until wilted. Add the chicken and continue to cook, stirring frequently until the chicken becomes white.

Pour in the water and add the lemon grass, kaffir leaves, taro and *patis*. Cover, allow to boil, lower the flame and simmer until both the chicken and the *gabi* are tender.

Add the rest of the ingredients and mix well. Allow the soup to simmer for 5 minutes more and serve immediately. Taste and correct seasonings if needed. Top with additional coriander leaves if desired.

Stewed Pork Legs with Peanuts

(glamorized Paksiw na Pata)
¼ c corn oil
1 tbsp pounded garlic
1 tbsp ginger, cut into thin strips
1 c onion, sliced
1 whole pork leg (*pata*), preferably front part, sliced into serving pieces
1/3 c soy sauce
2 tbsp hoisin sauce
¼ c rice wine
1 c water
1 tbsp white sugar
additional 3 ½ to 4 c water
½ tsp chili bean sauce
1 c peanuts, skinned and boiled until tender
1 tsp sesame oil
wansoy to garnish

Heat up the corn oil over medium flame in a stockpot or large wok. Add the garlic together with the ginger and the sliced onions and sauté until the onions become limp.

Add the pork and continue to sauté until the pork changes color. Pour in the next five ingredients and allow to boil with a cover on. Simmer for 30 minutes.

Add 1 c of water and allow to simmer for 15 minutes. Continue adding 1 c of water every 15 minutes. Water must be added gradually to ensure that a thick sauce is maintained. Do not hesitate to add more water if the pork is still tough. Just remember that it must be added a cup at a time.

As soon as the pork is tender, add the remaining ½ c water, chili sauce, peanuts and sesame oil. Simmer until the sauce thickens. Correct saltiness, if needed, by adding a little fine salt. Garnish with coriander.

Variation: Add 2 tsp fine shrimp paste or shrimp *bagoong* together with the chili sauce.

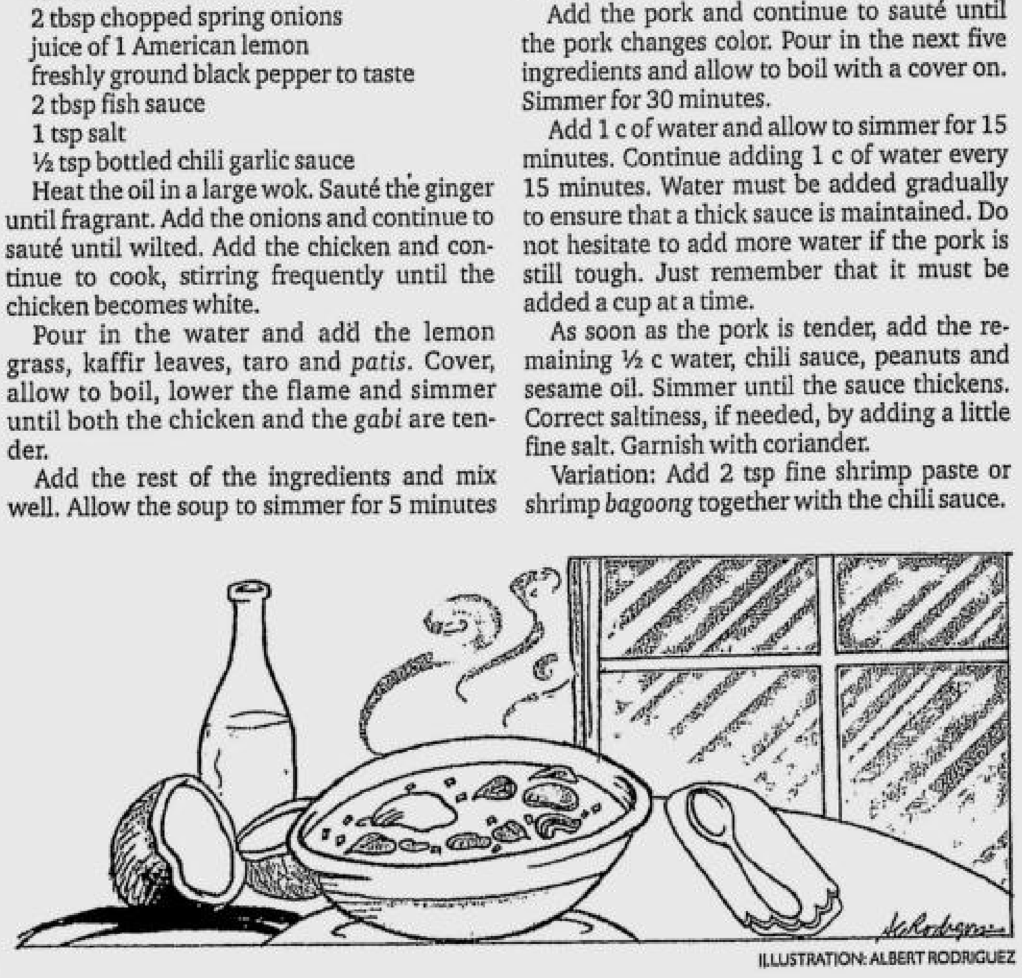


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Where to take Mom on her special day

DINING OUT

KIMPURA Japanese Restaurant has three specially prepared set menus for families. Besides the miso soup, rice and dessert, Set 1 includes Crab Salad, Shrimp Tempura, Enoki Teppan, Lapu-lapu Teppan and Beef Usuyaki. Set 2 has Agedashi Dofu, Prawns Teppanyaki, Chicken Teppanyaki and Sukiyaki Steak. Set 3 includes Kobachi of the Day, Tempura Moriawase, Chicken Teriyaki and Yakiniku. Mothers will be given one round of refreshing Green Tea Shake, compliments of the house. Located at 2/L Glorietta II, Ayala Center, Makati (tel. 893-2307/892-4456) and Greenhills Shopping Center (beside Uni-Mart), San Juan (tel. 721-8869/0581), and is open for lunch and dinner.

PEKING Garden has a set menu for 12, including four kinds of appetizer, Shark'S Fin with Fish Lip and Golden Mushroom Soup, Peking Duck, King Prawn Supreme with Cream of Egg White, Crispy Vegetables with Walnuts and Bamboo Shoots, Steamed Hilsa Herring Fish, Deep-fried Peppercorn Crabs, Braised E-fu Noodles with Mushrooms, Steamed Supreme Soup and Pork Dumplings, and Mango Pudding for dessert, at P9,380. Located at 2/L Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati (tel. 817-9086/87).

JADE Garden offers a special set menu for 12 that includes Roasted Meat Combination, Jade Pottage, Shrimps with Sweet Cashew Nuts, Steamed King Fish, Golden Roasted Chicken with Garlic, Peppercorn Crabs, Yeung Chow Fried Rice, and for dessert, Red Bean Puree and Sweet Dimsum Pastries, at P8,000. Located at Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center, Makati (tel. 892-2319/2636).

MARIO'S Restaurant is giving a gift certificate that entitles every dining mother to a complimentary main course from the regional specials. Call 634-3418/20 (Ortigas outlet) and 372-0360/415-3887 (Quezon City).

OUTBACK Restaurant Glorietta 4, Libis and Alabang Town Center offers Kookaburra Wings, King's Canyon Pork, Canberra Hamburger Steak, Walhalla Pasta and North Atlantic Salmon.

T.G.I. Friday's is giving away P250 gift certificates to all moms who dine in the restaurant. These may be used on their next visit to Friday's for a minimum food purchase of P750. Branches are located at Glorietta, Robinsons Place Manila, Hotel Rembrandt in Quezon City, Alabang Town Center and The Brickroad in Sta. Lucia East.

OODY'S invites mothers to bring their families on Mother's Day. For every group of four, mothers will receive a free gift from Oody's. Specialty of the month is spicy Noodles Salad with minced pork and seafood and Egg Noodles with Shrimp Wanton and Roast Duck in clear soup. Call 757-4258/59.

ITALIANNI'S offers the popular Spinach and Artichoke Formaggio, Chicken Barbecue Pizza, Herb-roasted Chicken, Angel Hair Pomodoro, New York-style Cheesecake. Mom gets to bring home free recipe booklets containing favorite Italianni's recipes like Linguine Vongole, Angel Hair Pomodoro and Penne Arrabiato. Located in Greenbelt 2, Glorietta 4, Alabang Town Center and SM City Bicutan.

HOTEL Inter-Continental Manila offers a special buffet for lunch and dinner at Café Jeepney for only P850+ per person. The Prince Albert Rotisserie will offer a set menu of haute cuisine dishes for only P3,000+ per person. Dining moms will receive prizes and a complimentary souvenir photo with the family. Call 815-9711 local 262.

BURGOO offers Spanish-inspired dishes: Callos Marinara and Gambas Al Ajillo. In cooperation with Tabasco and Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce, it is giving away specially made aprons to all moms who order these dishes. Burgoo has branches at 310 Tomas Morato Extension, South Triangle, Diliman, QC; 3/L Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati City; and 2/L The Podium, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong. Call 927-7424, 898-1815 or 687-5254.

CRAVINGS offers until May 11 a special set menu that entitles moms to free makeover at The Body Shop. On Mother's Day, moms will also receive a specially packaged potted plant and free hand massage.

EDSA Shangri-La's Garden Café offers a lunch and dinner buffet of Beef Flank Steak, Steamed Lapu-lapu, imported buttered lobsters, US prime rib and Mongolian barbecue. Children's station features mini hamburgers and spaghetti with meatballs. Lobby Lounge offers a snack buffet of roast beef sandwiches, ham and Swiss cheese rolls, *siomai*, Tuna Monte Cristo, and bread and butter pudding. Summer Palace has set lunch and dinner with prawn salad, fried crabs, scallops with asparagus, shark's fin with four treasures, etc. Inaho Tei serves sushi, sashimi, maki, teppanyaki, teriyaki, robatayaki. Choose from the Paparazzi set menu of deep-fried giant prawns, sole and salmon fillet with champagne sauce, cream of potato soup with porcini mushrooms, and chocolate mousse with grapefruit mosaic. Call 6338888 locals 2738/2739.

PENINSULA Manila offers Mother's Day Buffet at The Lobby , 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Nielsen's whips up Mom's Brunch Buffet, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Old Manila will be closed for lunch on Mother's Day, but reopens for dinner. Mi Piace, The Bar, Spices are open for lunch and dinner. The Upper Lobby is open for afternoon tea and Filipino merienda buffet. At Exclusivites, Mother's Day items, including specialty cakes, are available until May 11. Call 8872888.

MANDARIN Oriental Manila has Special Mother's Day buffets for brunch and dinner at The Brasserie and Tin Hau. The Tivoli offers a choice of main course with an appetizer and dessert buffet, priced at P1,200+ for adults and P750+ for children ages 5-12 years old, while five-course dinner set menu is offered at P1,600+ for adults and P900+ for children ages 5-12 years old. At the Mandarin Deli, a three-course set menu is available until May 11. Surprise gift items from Dove, Ph Care, Biomedis and Pharmaton await dining and room guest mothers on this day. Call 7508888 locals 2304 and 2305.

STREETLIFE Remix at Level 3, Glorietta 3 offers Mother's Day Lunch Buffet at 50 percent off to all moms: Chicken Lollipops, Calamares, Beef Caldereta, Sari-saring Sinugba, Chicken Barbecues, Pinoy Salad plus bottomless drinks and all the Nestle Ice Cream you can eat for only P350/adult and P200/kid aged 12 and below.

RICHMONDE Hotel offers a luncheon buffet of Adobong Sugpo sa Taba ng Talangka, Malasuge sa Bagoong at Gata, Crispy Pata and Spanish dishes such as Baked Oysters with Spinach, Morcon, Stew Ox Tail with Vegetables. The carving table offers Savory Rice with Chorizo, Chicken and Seafoods and Lechon de Leche. Call 638-7777.

SULO Hotel offers lunch buffet spread, musical entertainment and gift offerings from Bioessence, URC, Merced Bakeshop, Kraft Philippines, House of Sara Lee, Skin Mecca Bath Collections and flowers from Blue Ridge gardens. Located on Matalino Road, Diliman Civic Centre, QC. Call 9245051/71.

Make your own Mommy treat

SURPRISE mom with this unique breakfast or *merienda* treat by taking your Cinnabon Classic rolls a step further with the World Famous Cinnamon French Toast. This old-fashioned, family-style recipe was developed to pay special tribute to the art of home cooking and the rich tradition of fragrant and savory dishes lovingly created to nourish the soul as well as the body.

World Famous Cinnabon French Toast

(*Courtesy of Garett Cho, executive chef, Restaurants Unlimited*)

2 Cinnabon Classic Rolls
2 eggs
2/3 c milk
¾ tsp vanilla
1 tbsp sugar
1/8 tsp Makara Cinnamon
1-2 tbsp butter or margarine

Slice Cinnabon rolls in half horizontally. Place them, cut side up, on a plate and allow to dry for 20-30 minutes. Combine eggs, half-and-half, vanilla, sugar and Makara Cinnamon. Whisk together until all ingredients are well blended. Refrigerate until ready to use. At serving time, preheat oven to 400 °F, and place Cinnabon halves in a shallow baking dish. Pour French toast batter over halves and allow to soak for 5-10 minutes until moist. You may weigh the rolls down (cover them with waxed paper and place a heavy skillet on the paper) during this time to make sure batter is absorbed into the dough layers. Heat a heavy skillet and melt butter in it. When butter is hot, place the Cinnabon halves into the pan, gooey side down. Sear until golden brown. Turn the halves over, and place the skillet in the oven. Bake 8-10 minutes or until rolls are puffed up and golden. Serve with maple syrup. Serves 2.

Dining on flowers

HAVE you ever looked at a bouquet of fresh flowers and thought they looked and smelled delicious enough to eat? Many cultures over the centuries have discovered that besides being fragrant and beautiful, certain flowers are also quite tasty.

This recipe is faithfully recreated and then adapted by culinary innovator Vicky Veloso from her travels in Italy.

Fried Squash Blossoms

In Italy, these are made with zucchini blossoms, but locally, available squash blossoms (check your nearest market) do just fine.

1 dozen squash blossoms
1 or 2 oz mozzarella cheese
4 fillets Doña Elena anchovies
1 egg, beaten
½ c flour mixed with pinch of salt and pepper
Pietro Coricelli pure, extra light olive oil for frying

Trim off the stems of the squash blossoms. Rinse them upside down, making sure not to get water inside the flowers. Divide the cheese and anchovies among the flowers and fill the flower cups. Heat ½" of pure olive oil in a small skillet until hot. Coat the blossoms with the beaten egg, then the flour. Quickly fry till light brown. Drain and serve immediately as a first course.

For best results, use only the Pure Extra Light Olive Oil from Pietro Coricelli (look for the yellow label) because this is the only olive oil available in RP that is specially prepared for frying. Using extra virgin is definitely not recommended because frying with extra virgin will impart a bitter taste to the blossoms.

Culinary arts classes for kids, teens and adults

LET your kids appreciate the joy of cooking. Enroll them in culinary workshops at The Maya Kitchen Culinary Arts Center.

There's Junior Culinary Workshop for boys and girls 6-10 years old and Kiddie Meal Specials on May 14 and 15, 8:30 a.m.-12 nn. They will learn how to make Edible Fish Ball Mean and Lean Meatloaf, Potato Chip Chicken Fingers, Embutido Burger Rice, Baked Chicken Tomato Pasta, Rainbow Soup, Sweet and Sour Pops, Fish and Chips, plus an activity workshop on colored and flavored pasta making and homemade play dough.

The Young People's Cook-in for teeners will have a Chocolate Galore class on May 10 and 17, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. They will bake Chocolate Chunk, Banana Bars, Chocolate Cheesecake, Black and White Cookies, Trio of Chocolate Truffles, Chocolate Mousse, Chocolate Marzipan Fruit, plus an activity workshop on character color flow.

There are also courses for adults like Japanese cooking on May 17, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Recipes include Miso Soup, Mixed Tempura, Sukiyaki, Kamameshi, assorted Suchi: Kappamaki, Tekamaki, California Maki and Nigiri.

On the same day, 1:30-5 p.m., learn Gulaman Delights. Make Cathedral Window, Buko Pandan Salad, Moulded Fruit desserts, Icebox Cake, plus a lesson on edible centerpiece.

Visit Maya Kitchen Tuesday to Saturday on the 8/F Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City, or call 892-1185/5011 local 108. E-mail mayakitchen@pacific.net.ph.

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Per DTI-Cebu Permit No.187 Series of 2003.

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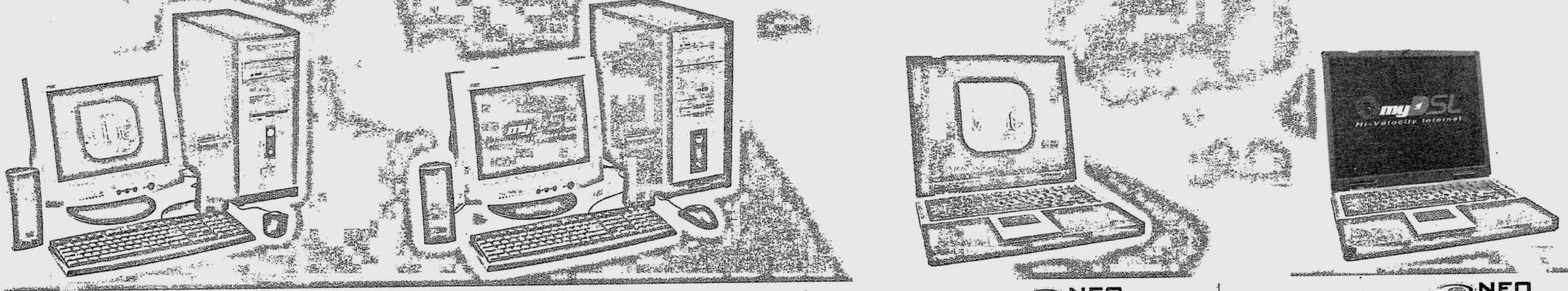

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Per DTI-NCR permit No. 1782 Series of 2003.

LIFESTYLE

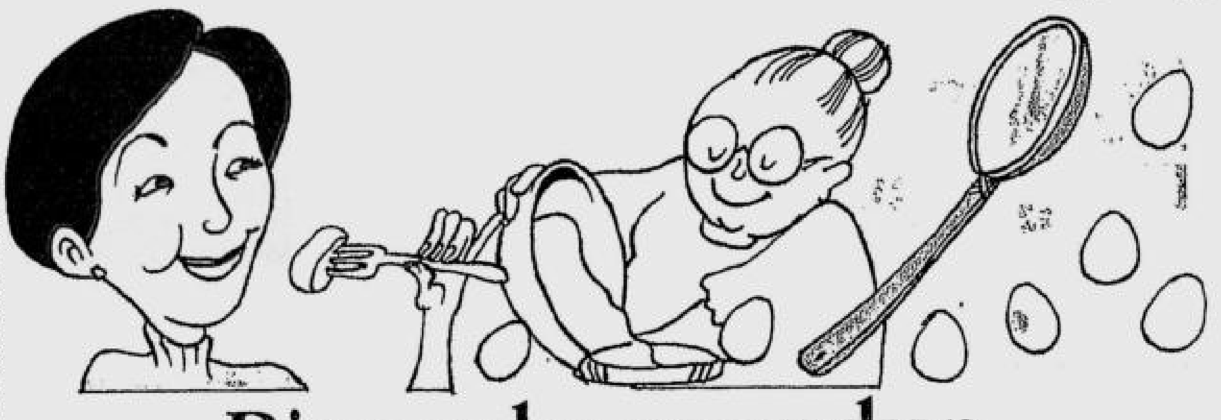

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Rice cake roundup

THE JOYFUL COOK

Felice Prudente Sta. Maria

THE JOYFUL Cook was enjoying a *merienda* of *bibingka* made by her neighbor Aling Rosa. It was an inch thick and soft, but more like a substantial pound cake than a fluffy pancake.

"It's a wonder each order gets here without the little boy who delivers it pinching off a bit. Even if a *bibingka* arrives wrapped up thickly in yesterday's newspaper tied with abaca twine, the warmth and aroma must tempt the palate. Aling Rosa is one of the few who can still make you a rice cake as large as a family-size pizza if not larger," said The Joyful Cook, relishing a forkful as Saint Sandok, the talking spoon and kitchen companion, watched intently, feasting with his invisible eyes.

"Aling Rosa doesn't alter her mother's way of making *bibingka* at all. She uses *milagrosa* grown from her fields for her own homemade *galapong*. And look at how she leaves the double layer of banana leaves that line the clay mold. The leaves prevent the cake from sticking to its pan. She even adds an extra layer after cooking to retain heat and moisture during delivery," Sandok observed. "We are very lucky here in our small town to have someone still giving this generation a true taste of tradition," he added.

Special occasion order

"Aling Rosa doesn't use an old quern, though, for making *galapong*. She runs grain and water through a corn grinder set to produce fine texture, but flour that is not as fine as wheat flour. That's part of the reason her cakes still taste old-fashion. They're a bit gritty—like biting into sand from Bohol resembling fine white granulated sugar rather than sand from Boracay that's like confectioner's sugar," TJC explained.

"It's become a charming custom for her to still expect customers to send eggs if they want them in their cake. The number of eggs suggests if the *bibingka* is for a special occasion. Only slight fermentation occurs when the *galapong* rests, making the *bibingka* rise. By adding beaten eggs to batter, cakes rise a little more and get a lighter texture. Baking powder is definitely not in her heirloom recipe," Sandok said.

"If you send a dozen eggs as you did, she figures you have special guests," he added. "That means she will add extra carabao cheese as topping and throw in more grated coconut, too."

TJC was into her second slice. "I love the way she sprinkles white sugar on top of everything after the cake is done. Then she applies a red-hot *siansi* to the grains, turning them into a delicious slightly burnt crust. It's the way a leg of ham used to be decorated for Christmas table. *Pinaplancha*, they used to say. It's

RICE/ D3

> There are as many kinds of 'bibingka' as there are rhymes and reasons in the regions of this country

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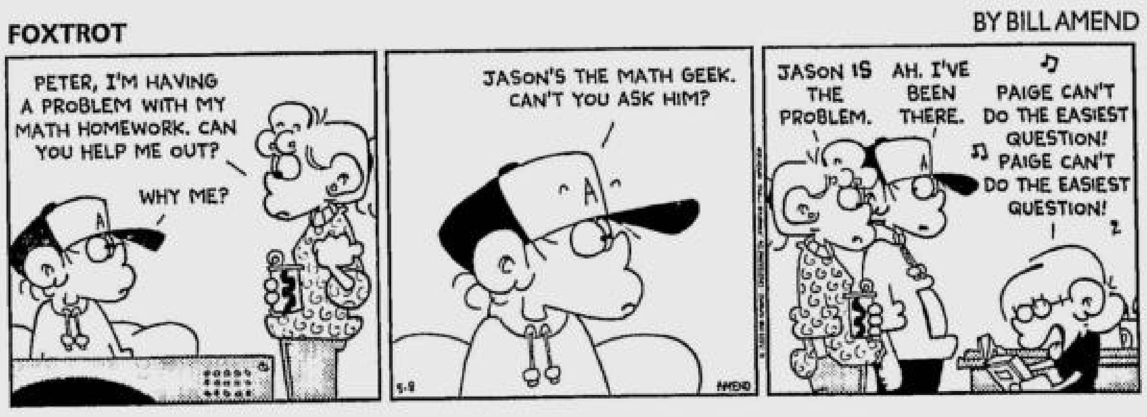
TERMS AND CONDITIONS:
- Promo period is from May 9 to 11, 2003.
- There could only be one plan for each direct line.
- PLDT reserves the right not to sell PLDT Hype texting devices to subscribers whose lines are temporarily or permanently disconnected.
- Should they discontinue subscriptions to plan for less than a year, they will be charged a termination fee of P1,500.
- Should subscriber downgrade plan from P550 to P250 for less than a year, he will be charged a downgrade fee of P300.

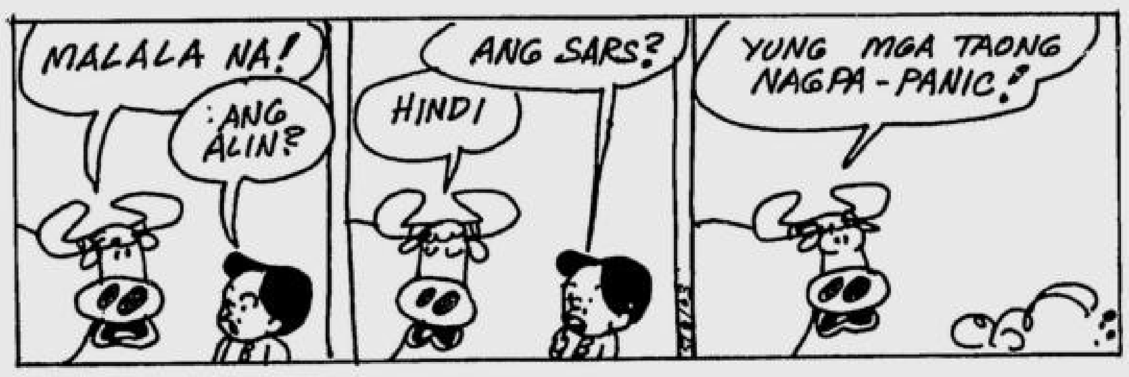
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


PETER, I'M HAVING A PROBLEM WITH MY MATH HOMEWORK. CAN YOU HELP ME OUT?
WHY ME?
JASON'S THE MATH GEEK. CAN'T YOU ASK HIM?
JASON IS THE PROBLEM.
AH. I'VE BEEN THERE.
♫ PAIGE CAN'T DO THE EASIEST QUESTION! ♫ PAIGE CAN'T DO THE EASIEST QUESTION!
5-8
AMEND

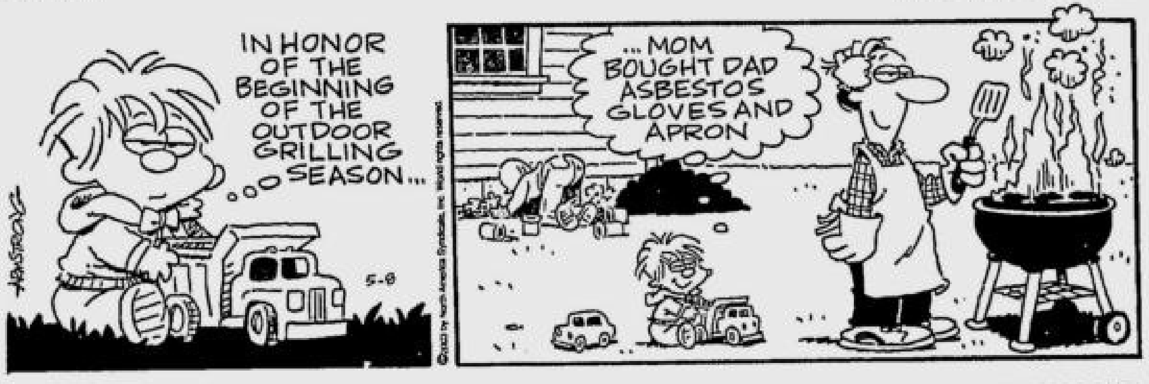
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MALALA NA!
ANG ALIN?
ANG SARS?
HINDI
YUNG MGA TAONG NAGPA-PANIC!

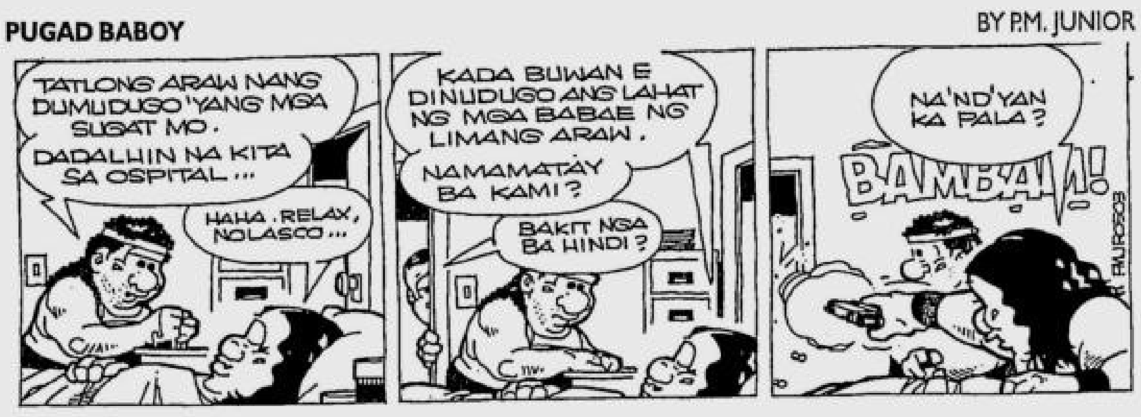
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


IN HONOR OF THE BEGINNING OF THE OUTDOOR GRILLING SEASON...
...MOM BOUGHT DAD ASBESTOS GLOVES AND APRON
5-8
ARMSTRONG

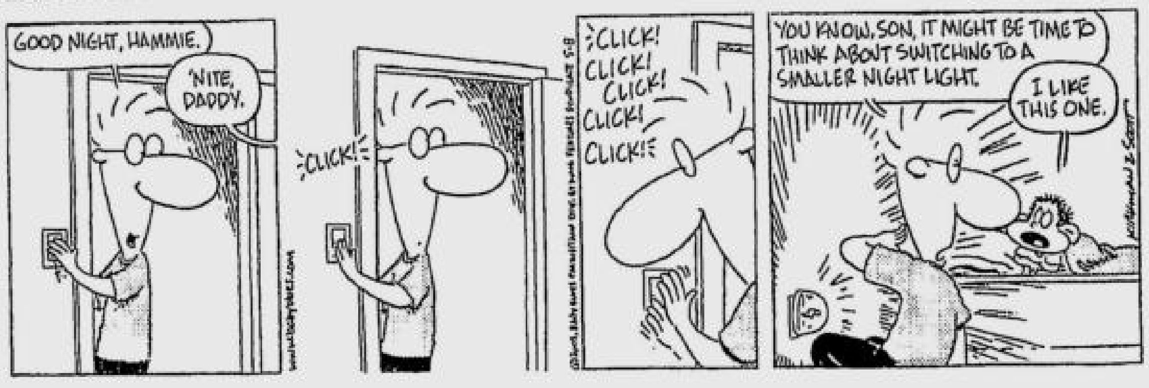
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


TATLONG ARAW NANG DUMUDUGO 'YANG MGA SUGAT MO.
DADALHIN NA KITA SA OSPITAL...
HAHA. RELAX, NOLASCO...
KADA BUWAN E DINUDUGO ANG LAHAT NG MGA BABAE NG LIMANG ARAW.
NAMAMATAY BA KAMI?
BAKIT NGA BA HINDI?
NA'ND'YAN KA PALA?
BAMBAM!
PMJR0503

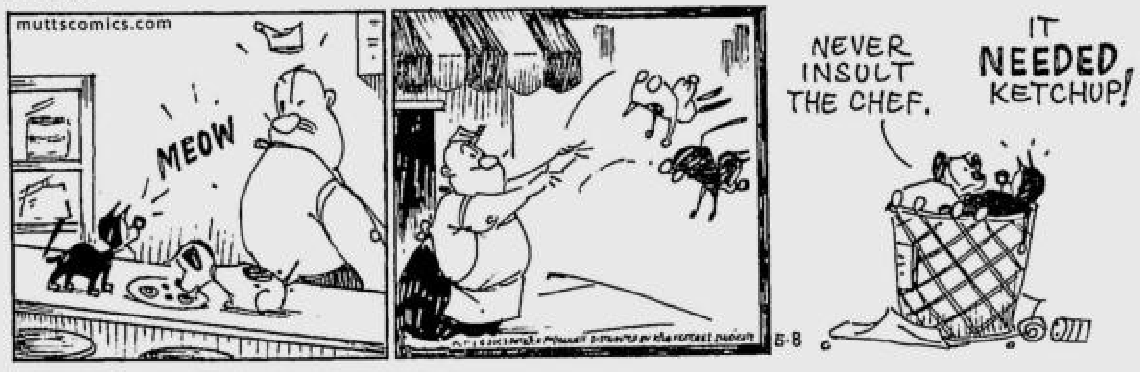
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


GOOD NIGHT, HAMMIE.
'NITE, DADDY.
CLICK!
CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!
YOU KNOW, SON, IT MIGHT BE TIME TO THINK ABOUT SWITCHING TO A SMALLER NIGHT LIGHT.
I LIKE THIS ONE.

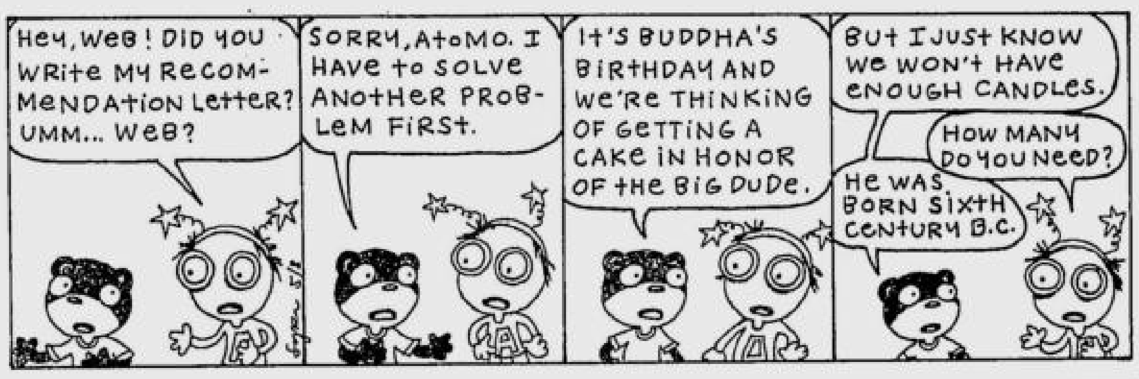
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


muttscomics.com
MEOW
NEVER INSULT THE CHEF.
IT NEEDED KETCHUP!
5-8

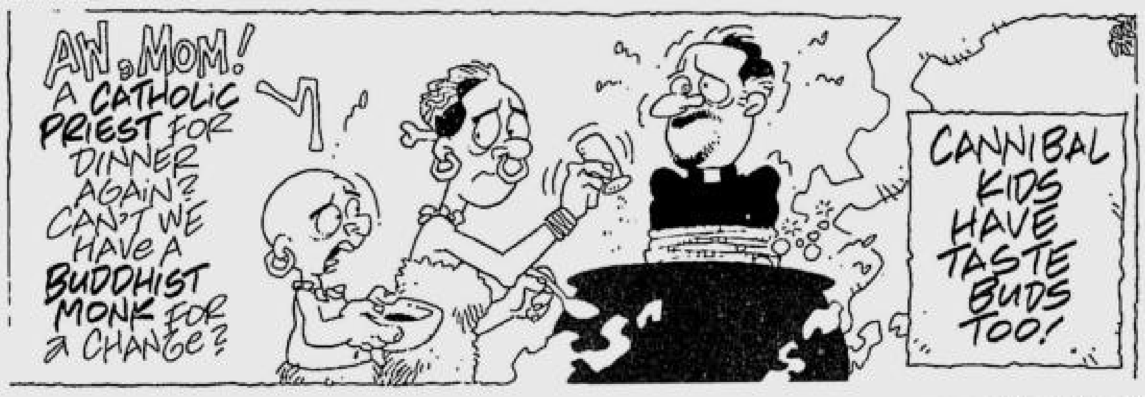
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, Web! Did you write my recommendation letter? Umm... Web?
Sorry, Atomo. I have to solve another problem first.
It's Buddha's birthday and we're thinking of getting a cake in honor of the big dude.
But I just know we won't have enough candles.
How many do you need?
He was born sixth century B.C.

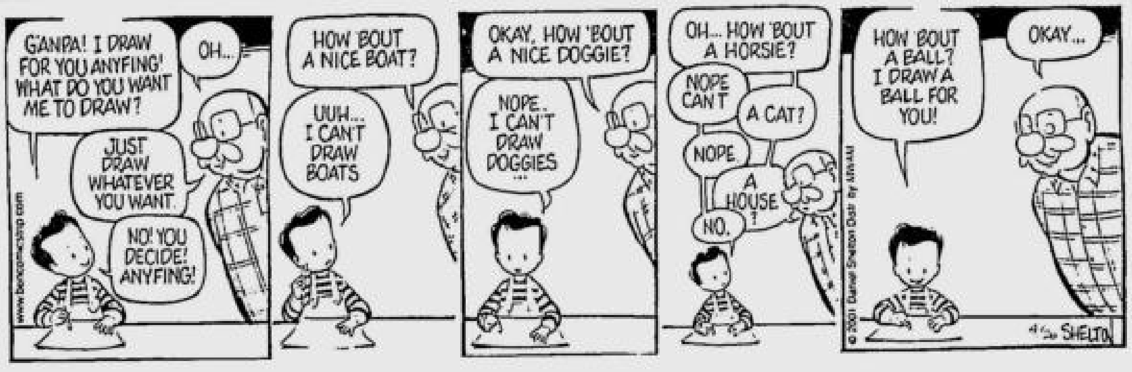
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


AW, MOM! A CATHOLIC PRIEST FOR DINNER AGAIN? CAN'T WE HAVE A BUDDHIST MONK FOR A CHANGE?
CANNIBAL KIDS HAVE TASTE BUDS TOO!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GANPA! I DRAW FOR YOU ANYFING! WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DRAW?
OH...
JUST DRAW WHATEVER YOU WANT.
NO! YOU DECIDE! ANYFING!
HOW 'BOUT A NICE BOAT?
UUH... I CAN'T DRAW BOATS
OKAY, HOW 'BOUT A NICE DOGGIE?
NOPE. I CAN'T DRAW DOGGIES...
OH... HOW 'BOUT A HORSIE?
NOPE CAN'T
A CAT?
NOPE.
A HOUSE?
NO.
HOW 'BOUT A BALL? I DRAW A BALL FOR YOU!
OKAY...
SHELTON

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a strong sense of justice. Because of this, you are protective of those who need your care and support. Regardless of your size, you radiate power. You hate tyranny and always fight on the side of the underdog. This year you will begin something new or enter an entirely new field.
Birthdate of: Dame Glenda Jackson; actress; John Corbett, actor; Albert Finney, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a wonderful day for parties, lunches with friends and enjoying playful activities with children. You feel flirtatious and fun-loving.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Think about how you can improve relations with family members today. Do not take your family for granted. When things go wrong, these are the people you will turn to.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Short trips and pleasant shopping adventures please you today. You have a strong desire to do anything out of the ordinary. You want to break free of your everyday routine.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Stay on top of your banking needs today. Figure out what you have and what you owe. This could be a sobering moment, but at least you will know.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): The Moon is in Leo today, and this gives you energy and joy. You are extremely generous. Share your good feelings and positive views with everyone you meet.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Take some time to be by yourself today to organize your thoughts. Your hope to travel or pursue advanced courses needs time for clear, logical planning.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Whatever you do today, you will be noticed more than usual. Fortunately, you are one person who always looks well-pulled-together and color-coordinated!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Discussions with a female boss or a woman who is older, wiser and more experienced can benefit you. Important exchanges with a parent might also take place.

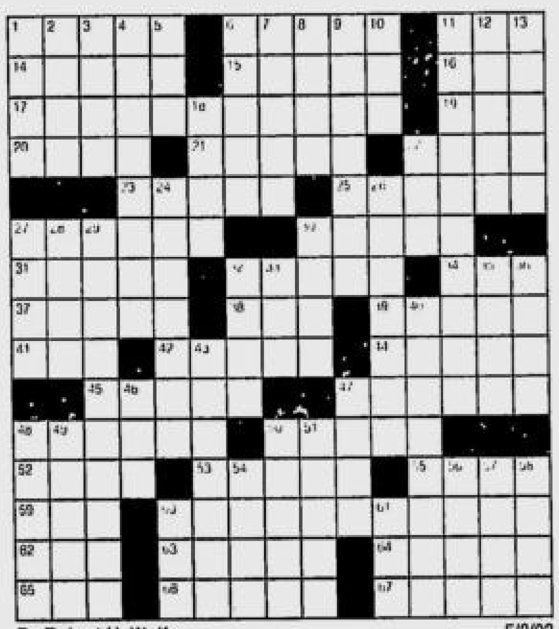
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You adore travel because you want to know more about life, the world and everything in it. Do anything today that feeds your hunger to acquire knowledge.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Others are ready to lend you money or help you in some way today. This assistance might be small; nevertheless, always accept assistance that comes your way. (Rebuffed offers make people angry.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Give attention to a close friend or partner today. With fiery Mars in your sign, you have been a bit aggressive lately. Try eating a little humble pie (but use lots of whipped cream).

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Before you make party plans for this evening, work hard to get better organized today. This is a pleasant day for socializing as well as for getting a lot done.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY
5/8/03

ACROSS
1 Type of orange
6 Assimilate
11 Positive hand signals
14 Made out
15 Actress Berry
16 Spanish article
17 Angry
19 Mazel __!
20 Large amount
21 Action site
22 Steady, easy stride
23 Senator Hatch
25 Flat-bottom, open boats
27 Writer/director Nora
30 Burpee purchase
31 Bullwinkle, e.g.
32 Fidgety
34 Corrida shout
37 Sulked
38 Connect
39 Jackrabbits
41 High mountain
42 WWII craft
44 In a dominant position
45 Letter-shaped girder
47 Posh
48 Howlers
50 "Carmen" composer
52 Minute pond plant
53 Athenian marketplace
55 Hidden fence
59 Lip
60 Angry
62 Latin eggs
63 "Skittle Players" painter
64 Public persona
65 Rorem or Beatty
66 Software buyers
67 Appointed

DOWN
1 Switch positions
2 Put to sea
3 Comic Johnson
4 Deteriorate
5 Old name for Tokyo
6 Colette novel
7 Like Cheerios
8 Lena or Ken
9 Delights
10 Turner or Knight
11 Angry
12 Big name in publishing
13 Rescues
18 Bossy's home
22 Corneal protector
24 Eurasian ruminant
26 Eavesdropper's post
27 Austen novel
28 Combine
29 Angry
30 Leave text as is!
32 Molecule element
33 Actress Peeples
35 Tolstoy and Durocher
36 Spot
40 Detested person
43 Glassy volcanic rocks
46 Arthur of "Maude"
47 Old autocrat
48 German noble
49 Yellowish green
50 Leafy shelter
51 Shackles
54 Elation
56 Arkin or West
57 Very large
58 Copied
60 Tempe sch.
61 Reunion group

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

D	R	A	M	A	■	W	R	A	P	■	G	L	E	N
R	E	R	A	N	■	R	O	S	A	■	R	E	D	O
A	L	I	T	T	L	E	W	H	I	L	E	A	G	O
P	A	S	■	I	O	N	S	■	D	E	E	P	E	N
E	X	E	M	P	T	S	■	S	C	A	N	■	■	■
■	■	■	O	A	S	■	F	L	A	■	S	A	A	B
A	P	E	R	S	■	B	L	I	S	S	■	U	S	A
J	U	S	T	T	H	E	O	T	H	E	R	D	A	Y
A	R	A	■	O	A	S	E	S	■	Q	U	I	P	S
R	E	U	P	■	D	T	S	■	S	U	N	■	■	■
■	■	■	Y	E	W	S	■	T	E	E	T	H	E	S
B	I	S	T	R	O	■	A	W	E	S	■	E	L	I
I	N	T	H	E	R	E	C	E	N	T	P	A	S	T
O	R	E	O	■	D	A	R	E	■	E	E	R	I	E
S	E	W	N	■	S	U	E	D	■	R	A	T	E	S

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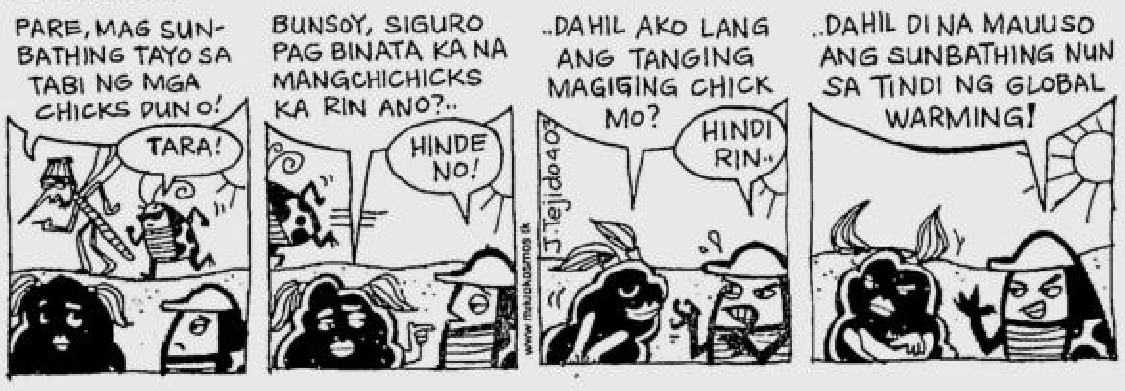
5/8/03

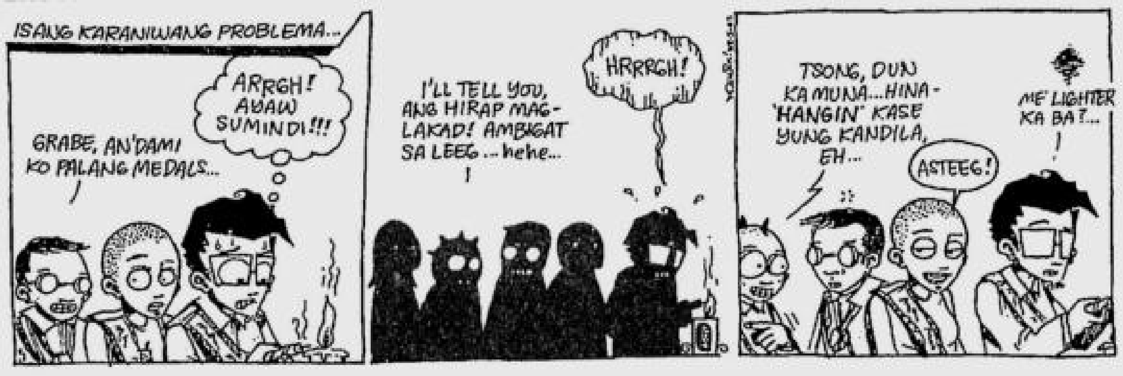
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PARE, MAG SUNBATHING TAYO SA TABI NG MGA CHICKS DUN O!
TARA!
BUNSOY, SIGURO PAG BINATA KA NA MANGCHICHICKS KA RIN ANO?..
HINDE NO!
..DAHIL AKO LANG ANG TANGING MAGIGING CHICK MO?
HINDI RIN..
..DAHIL DI NA MAUUSO ANG SUNBATHING NUN SA TINDI NG GLOBAL WARMING!
J.Tejido403

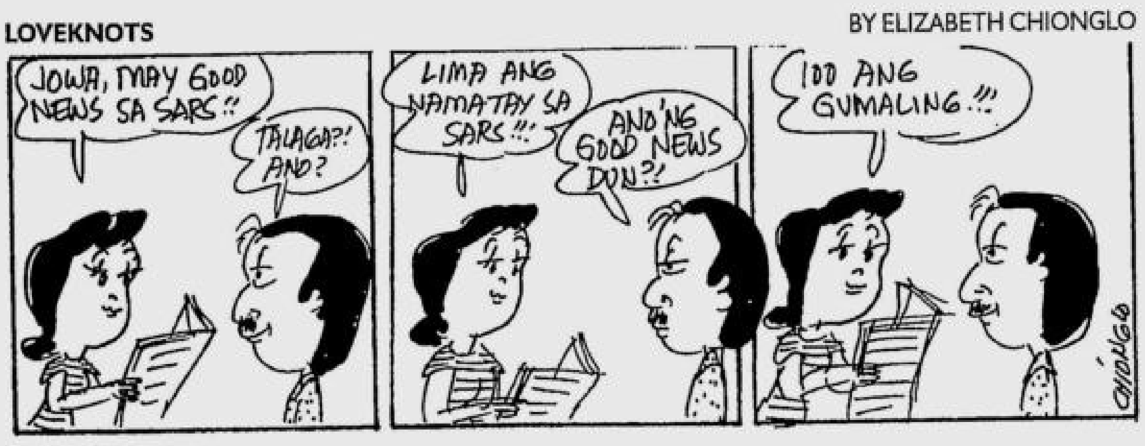
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ISANG KARANIWANG PROBLEMA...
GRABE, AN'DAMI KO PALANG MEDALS...
ARRGH! AYAW SUMINDI!!!
I'LL TELL YOU, ANG HIRAP MAGLAKAD! AMBIGAT SA LEEG...hehe...
HRRRGH!
TSONG, DUN KA MUNA...HINA-'HANGIN' KASE YUNG KANDILA, EH...
ASTEEG!
ME' LIGHTER KA BA?...

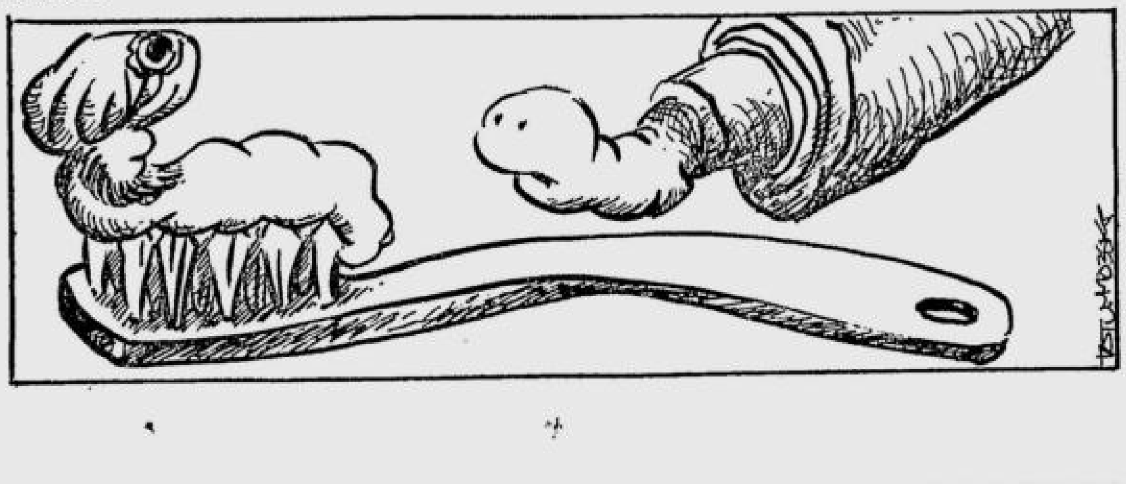
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, MAY GOOD NEWS SA SARS!!
TALAGA?! ANO?
LIMA ANG NAMATAY SA SARS!!!
ANO'NG GOOD NEWS DON?!
100 ANG GUMALING!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



Metro Manila is now thieves' paradise

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

IT'S a crying shame how Metro Manila has become a thieves' paradise, and authorities cannot do anything to protect the citizens.

Two PDI employees, for example, were victims of cellular phone snatchers right in front of the PDI building, in broad daylight at that. Two more people we know were divested of valuables inside a taxi, on two separate instances along the Mandaluyong-Makati Avenue route. Recently, we heard over the radio that a group of FX commuters bound for Las Piñas were robbed by a group of men inside the vehicle.

Now comes this e-mail message from csmarquez@ayalasystems, relaying the experience of a Makati female executive. She reportedly boarded a cab at Shangri-La Mall and was southbound when the friendly driver suggested a different route to allegedly avoid an accident that was blocking traffic on the highway. Left with no option, she agreed and proceeded to make her cell phone calls and text messages.

Somewhere along C-5, the driver said he had to pull over to the curb to help a fellow taxi driver whose cab apparently bogged down.

As soon as the driver parked his cab, however, a man forced his way in. The cab driver then cruised on C-5 while the thief grabbed her cellular phone and took all valuables from her purse, including her ATM cards. That was not the end of it. She was asked for the PIN codes of her ATM accounts. When the cab stopped near a BPI ATM booth, the man rolled down his window. Another man appeared to get the card and listen to instructions on how to access the account. She found out later that the thieves were able to withdraw P10,000.

To cut the story short, the executive was released somewhere along C-5. Stripped of all her valuables, she had no choice but to take another cab to get home.

She said she thought she was street smart enough to sense the threat of thievery. The bad experience made her smarter, she rationalized, and cautioned the public, "Next time you take a cab and the driver suggests an out-of-the-way route, or he tells you to wait while he has to stop for a while, expect the worst."

Reliable R&E call-a-taxi

Here's a different story as journalist Linda B. of lindab@wave.com.ph shares with readers her pleasant taxi experience. She related to us that she arrived in Quezon City from an assignment in Vigan, right in the thick of a downpour last Sunday. At 6 p.m. on a late afternoon, and encumbered by her overnight bag, camera and *pasalubong*, she would have been stranded on busy Edsa had it not been for the R&E taxi-by-phone service.

"The taxi was there 15 minutes after my call and asked me if my name was Aling Linda. It's a reliable service that operates 24 hours," she said. The R&E phone-a-cab lines are: 330-1654; 364-9058; and 362-9089.

Touch Mobile replies to gripes

M. Roslinda of Cebu City (roskids2002@yahoo.com), a Touch Mobile prepaid customer, complained: "I thought my Sendo 200 unit was defective. When I put the new SIM card into the unit, it would only say 'check operator services,' but when I use a different SIM card in the same unit, it worked well."

She had P152.50-worth of load when she started calling hotline customer service to complain. She made seven calls and, seven times, operators told her, "We apologize for the inconvenience... and hope that the service will be activated within 24 hours." With her load down to about P139, Roslinda griped that she was frustrated and exasperated.

Touch Mobile subscriber J. Barrera wrote: "I am a sucker for deals so, I was naturally drawn to Touch Mobile's well-advertised free-ice-cream promo that offered redeemable free ice cream within 24 hours after activation. I bought the SIM card on March 27 and had it activated the following day. After complying with the instructions (on how to avail of the promo offer), I waited for the text message that would confirm I was entitled to the free ice cream."

Barrera said he waited patiently for one week. Every time he called customer service, he was told the text advisory would come within 24 hours. The text message, however, has yet to show on the screen. He griped, "Last time I called, the customer service operator advised me to wait for the message that would surely come before the end of the promo on April 30." That would be 576 hours of waiting.

Hopefully the subscribers' frustrations will be relieved now that Joyce Capacillo (jlcapacillo@globetel.com.ph), chief of Touch Mobile's acquisition section, promised us she would personally follow up complaints with customer service.

Lost airplane ticket

A Cebu Pacific passenger lost the return portion of a round-trip ticket (Manila-Cagayan de Oro-Manila) and had to buy a new ticket to be able to return to Manila. The local airline office had refused to give her a refund but assured her that the lost ticket would be blocked off so it couldn't be used anymore. She was told she could claim the refund in Manila. When she asked the Manila office for a refund, however, she was informed she could only get her money back if she could submit her lost ticket with the claim.

Come on, Cebu Pacific. The ticket was lost, so the customer had to buy a replacement. Moreover, the lost ticket had been officially blocked off so nobody could use it. In the name of customer goodwill, give her money back. Anyway, we forwarded the complaint of the passenger to Jun Dominguez of Cebu Pacific communications office.

Harassment by credit collectors

Comment from Romeo S. Lirio, a credit card holder, of SSS Village, Marikina City: "Credit card companies should give their collectors seminars that will teach them simple courtesy, good manners and right conduct. Collectors always threaten creditors that if their overdue accounts are not settled immediately, they will have to deal with lawyers and their names will be blacklisted by credit card companies. Instead of antagonizing the creditors with arrogance, discourtesy and threats, the collectors should be polite to encourage creditors to pay their overdue account."

E-mail the author at mgiron@i-manila.com.ph or lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

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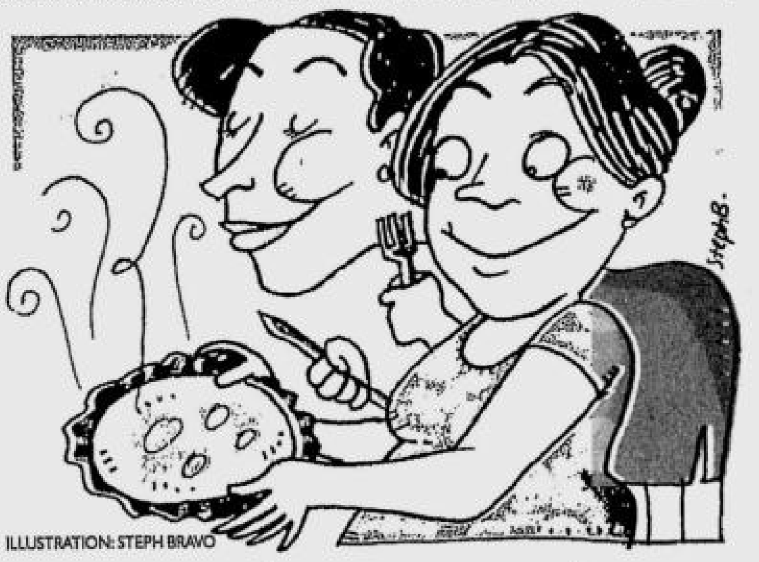

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Rice cake roundup

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akin to torching a creme brulée. Aling Rosa never puts salted egg slices nor substitutes cow cheese. Neither does she use wheat flour."

Wheat and rice flours

"Wheat flour has gluten while rice flour doesn't," said Sandok. "That's why the two flours make cakes with different characteristics. Gluten is an elastic substance so it can retain carbon dioxide produced by yeast as well as the gases generated during baking. Gases just collapse in rice dough. Gluten is what gives structure to bread and raised baked goods. It's gluten that also turns a *bibingka* untraditional," Sandok ventured.

"*Galapong* can be cooked wet or dry, meaning steamed or baked," he explained. "Chinese traders and immigrants must have introduced the *bibingkera* to the archipelago. I wonder if it was before or during Spanish times? I don't think anyone knows for sure, even if the stove-top oven existed in China for a long time," he noted.

"'Bi' is a Chinese word for 'rice' according to Arsenio Manuel," TJC noted.

Cakes and puddings

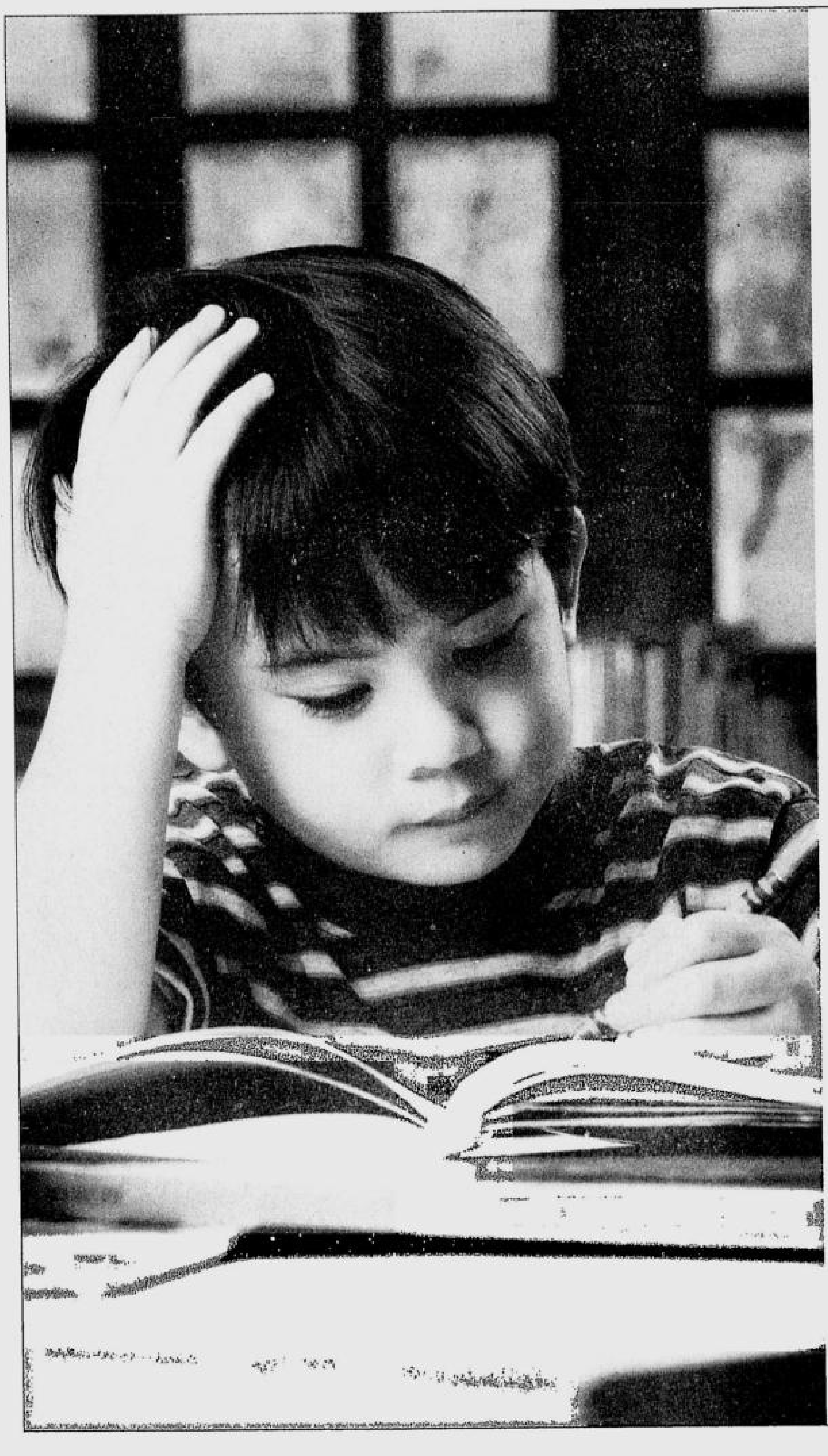
"The Spanish initially classified *bibingka* as a pudding, not a cake, and noted it needed ordinary rice made into a wet paste. Then in 1877 one record says *bibingka* was made with eggs. In an 1880 Ilocano vocabulary, *bibingka* batter is described as using glutinous rice powder, sugar and coconut milk," she added.

Sandok started thinking about the many *bibingka* types he had seen in the past. "There was *bibingkang nasi—nasi*, meaning 'rice' in Kapampangan—made with half-cooked sticky rice, coconut milk and syrup. Unlike Tagalog *bibingka*, the Pampanga one was covered with coconut milk. In Pandacan, Manila, there was a really wonderful variety: *galapong* mixed with grated and chunky *ube* then topped with slices of carabao cheese before baking," he said with nostalgia.

"I wonder why the Spanish thought *bibingka* was a pudding? It has the characteristics of a cake. It's not soft like a pudding, for instance. A local pudding would be *kalamay*. *Ube jalea* comes close," said TJC.

"If cooked in a *bibingkera* it's a cake. The Chinese invention allows heat above and below a cake pan. That's baking in a simple way. A simpler method is digging a pit and filling it with heat so it becomes an underground oven,"

RICE/D4



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Rice cake roundup

From page D3

Sandok ventured. "Puddings are cooked stove-top like a *bibingka*, but they don't require heat above the cooking pan."

"There are so many other rice delicacies. Some are boiled while wrapped in leaves or steamed in bamboo tubes," said TJC. "Others are shod in bamboo joints or thick leaf wrappers then baked in pits as you recalled. Rice fritters are fried in coconut oil or lard.

"We use island-grown flavorings, not vanilla. I really sometimes wish that we'd just stick to native flavors if we claim to be making authentic Filipino food. We can use coconut, honey, pandan, fragrant screwpine and even cane juice or simple unrefined sugars. By adding *ube*, corn and banana we are also flavoring," she opined.

"Why not make native floating islands for tomorrow's *merienda*," Sandok requested. "That way we're really going back to early cooking techniques and flavors."

Next: Floating islands, Philippine style

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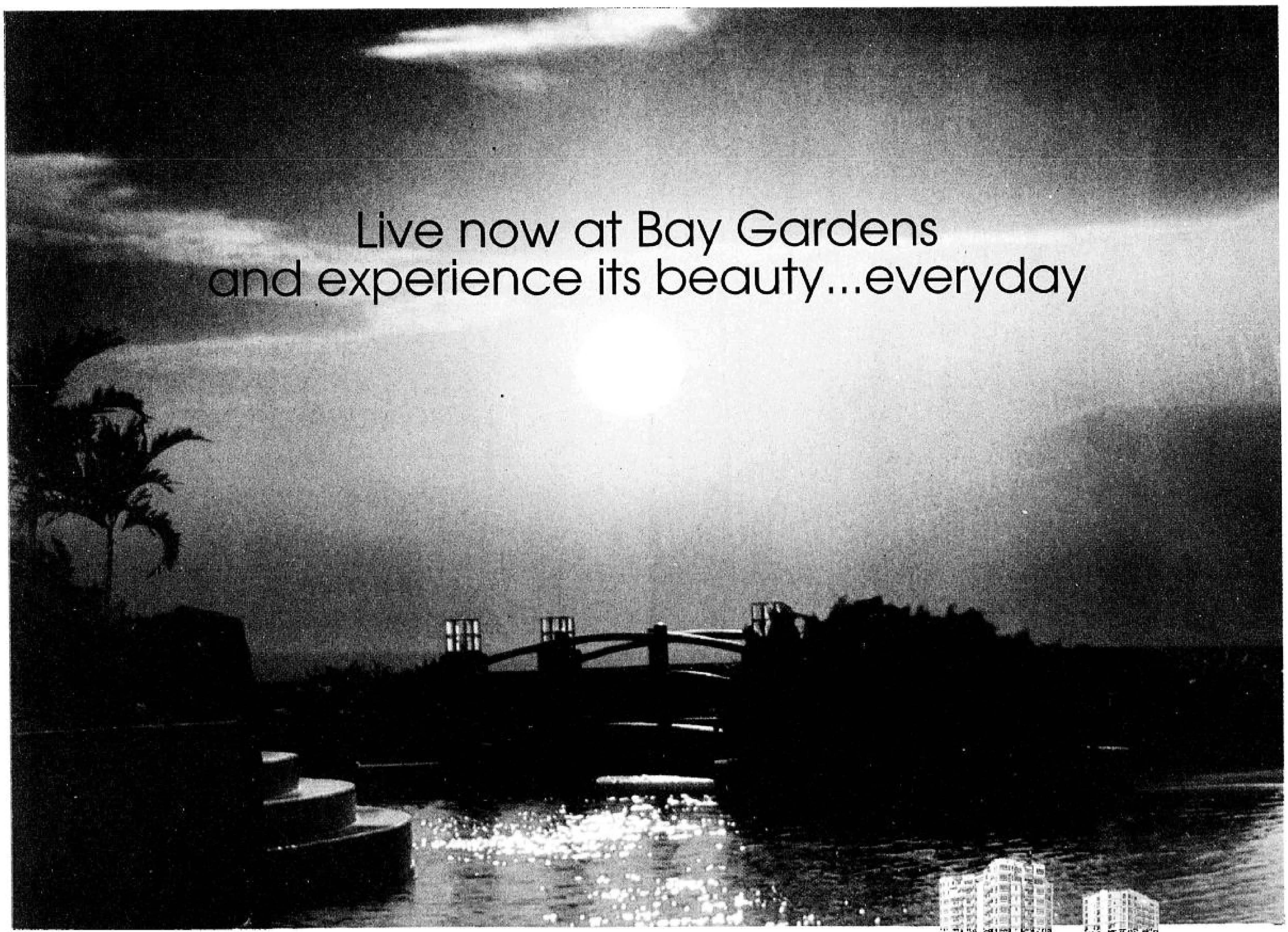

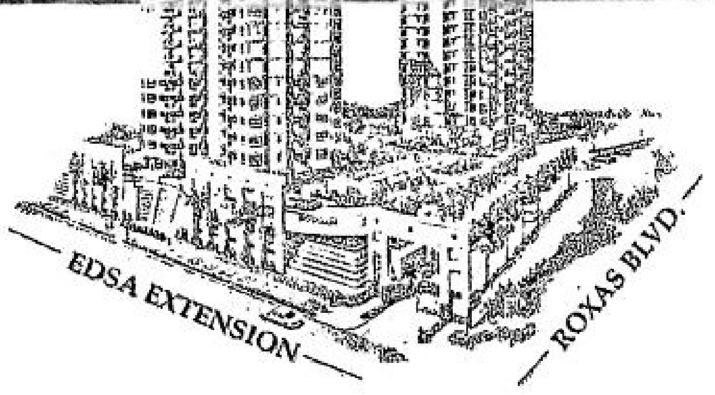

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